THE BIRTH OF BOTSWANA

A History of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1910 to 1966

edited by
F. Morton and J. Ramsay

LONGMAN
BOTSWANA

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Cover photograph of Kgosi Isang Pilane (standing) in kgotla in Mochudi c1928: courtesy of St Paul's (Anglican) Church, Molepolole.

Dedicated to
Isaac Schapera

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Note to Students, Teachers and Readers

Spelling

English spelling in this volume is based on preferred usage as specified in the **Oxford Concise** and **Pocket** dictionaries.

The spelling of place names follows current standard usage as listed by the Place Names Commission. "Gaberones" is used to refer to the colonial offices near Tlokweng, whereas "Gaborone" refers to the capital town that came into existence in 1964. "Mafikeng" is used throughout this volume instead of the colonial "Mafeking" because the former term has recently become the standard reference for the same town.

Spellings and prefixes for African group names are those used by the people referred to: for example, BaKalanga, San and BaYei instead of BaKalaka, MaSarwa and MaKoba. (NB: terms not preferred usually carry a derogatory meaning).

African terminology

Many African terms have been inserted in the text rather than their English approximates, because single English terms (e.g., "chief" in the place of "Kgosi") seldom convey the correct meaning. For brief definitions of African terms used in this book, see the Glossary on pages 198-200.

Capitalization of African terms follows this rule: whenever a term, or any part of it, refers to a proper noun or proper prefix, the first letter appears in upper case. Thus, Kgosi is capitalized because it is a title; BaNgwato contains two capital letters because Ba- refers to people, and Ngwato refers to the particular grouop of people; diKgosi contains only K in upper case because di- is a simple, plural prefix.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

Botswana was not created by nationalist politicians, nor was the seed of this country fertilized by Nationalism. The National Assembly and the multiparty system are the adoptive parents of a child born out of wedlock. Botswana's mother was a member of an old, established family, and she passed on to her son much of her heritage. Her given name was Dichaba, though she is known now as MmaSechaba. She was descended from the many heterogeneous branches of people fringing the Kgalagadi whose cultural diversity had been wedded over generations to SeTswana, community-based institutions. Her ancestors included the kgotla, the ward system, cattle ownership, community labour and centralized authority. She was a resilient person, outspoken and jealous of her rights, though patient and observant of others. When fully mature, Dichaba was taken by an interloper known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He was related through Britain to the Union of South Africa, but distrusted his Boer in-laws and so never took Dichaba to live with them. Much of the father's ancestry has no trace in the child, but certain features are clearly visible: boundaries, central government, taxation and European laws. Botswana's mother feared and disliked this man who, before leaving Mma Sechaba, handed over their child to the National Assembly and Political Parties to care for.

Introduction: Seeing Botswana as a Whole

The Republic of Botswana is a nation created for the people to plan their future; the Bechuanaland Protectorate was a system devised for rulers to control their subjects. Botswana is a republic of merafe which form an independent country; Bechuanaland was a territory of tribes which formed part of the British Empire. The Republic is made up of citizens who are governed by their representatives; the Protectorate was made up of natives who were governed by Imperial officials.

The colonial system

During the colonial period Africans were expected to live in separate tribal compartments. Apart from a small number of people in the Crown Lands, most Africans had access to land only as residents in one of the nine Native Reserves. There, above every small group of men, women and children stood an appointed headman; above a large group of headmen a recognized chief; above him a white Magistrate; and above him a ladderful of white commissioners extending from the Reserve up to the Dominions Office in London.

The Protectorate Government was not created to unify the people. Its task was preserving the territory as part of the Empire. The system it used, therefore, was designed with this overall practical purpose in mind. Officials wrote many letters and reports to one another in order to keep each other informed. They were concerned mainly about events or people that threatened to upset the way the Government functioned. They also devised plans to direct the way in which people were supposed to behave, conduct themselves and put into practice certain changes in their lives.

By and large, the Protectorate Government expected people to accept the decisions of their superiors. Colonial rule was not built on the principle of democracy. It was built on the belief that the

British alone had sufficient knowledge and ability to rule. Africans were thought to be incapable of progress without generations of western education and immitation of British ways. Colonial rulers were convinced of their superiority, even though they acknowledged that certain Africans were talented. Colonials admired most those Africans who controlled their people, used British techniques and appearances, and accepted British rule. In general, however, colonials regarded Africans at large as persons of low mental and social ability.

Colonial rule was an efficient system. Before independence, white officials running the Protectorate numbered fewer than 100 men. They succeeded in governing this large country because their aims were limited to three: controlling disorder, collecting revenue and introducing small-scale improvement projects. The first two of these three aims consumed nearly all of their time until World War II and most of their time thereafter. Control involved overseeing justice, quickly punishing offenders, reporting in detail political developments and using police (and outside forces if need be) to support any local action against opponents of the Reserve government. Collecting revenue meant doing just that, as well as encouraging the public to find cash to meet annual tax deadlines. The colonial Government cooperated closely with the many agents in the Protectorate channelling labourers to the mines in South Africa.

Protectorate administrators in the Reserve functioned within a system whereby orders were issued from above. When the High Commissioner issued a Proclamation, it was the duty of officials below to enforce it along with all other laws passed down from his headquarters in South Africa and all instructions from the Resident Commissioner's office in Mafikeng. The advice of local officials about conditions in the Reserve might be consulted, and their ideas might influence decisions higher up, but their value to the administration depended on doing what their superiors expected or told them to do. One of the characteristics of colonial rule is that local officials usually knew more about conditions in the Protectorate than did their superiors. The better ones learnt SeTswana and other languages fluently, understood traditional law and custom and empathized with the problems facing the people. These men could have a great influence in the day-to-day running of the local administration, but very few had any significant influence whatsoever on decisions made in London.

The Colonial Heirarchy

Parliament(London)

↕

Dominions Secretary (London)
(after 1948, Commonwealth Secretary)

↕

High Commissioner
(after 1931, High Commissioner for South Africa
and in charge of the High Commission Territories)

↕

Resident Commissioner (Mafikeng)

↕

Divisional Commissioners, South and North, 1950-1965
(Gaborones and Francistown)

↕

Resident Magistrate
(after 1935, District Commissioner)

↕

Kgosi

The role of diKgosi

At the bottom of the colonial order sat the Kgosi. During the colonial period, the British expected diKgosi (whom they called "chiefs") to serve the Government in much the same manner as white officials. DiKgosi were delegated the tasks of controlling their people, collecting tax and implementing changes introduced from above. The Government paid them something like a salary by allowing them to keep ten per cent of all Hut Tax receipts. DiKgosi were allowed to change and abolish customary laws and practices, maintain their own police force and administrative staff, raise money and conscript labour for public purposes and banish their opponents from the Reserve. In so doing, however, they remained subject to the approval of the colonial Government. DiKgosi were the official representatives of their people, but officials listened

Dikgosi Tshekedi and Bathoen II on the occasion of the visit of the British Royal Family, April 1947

most to diKgosi whom they considered to be loyal to themselves and the British Monarchy.

DiKgosi stood, in other words, between the people and the colonial officials. Each Kgosi was judged by his white superiors on the one hand and by his African subjects on the other. Each Kgosi had to measure his duty according to the aims and wishes of his people and those of his white overlords. Pleasing both sides was a difficult task, because each had opposing ideas about bogosi. The people wanted diKgosi to take their views into account and act in their general interest; the Government wanted diKgosi to operate within guidelines set by themselves and serve the Protectorate's interests. If the Kgosi spoke for the people against the wishes of Government, the Kgosi was asking for trouble. Likewise, if the Kgosi acted against the people even with Government support, the Kgosi was likely to encounter resistance. The only difference was

that, for many years, diKgosi could survive against opposition from their own people but not from Government.

No two diKgosi wrestled with this dilemma in the same way. As many examples in this book will show, each Kgosi assumed power with a particular set of talents, views and constraints. At one time or another, each tested his or her will against that of Government and/or the people. And no Kgosi could afford to favour one side completely against the other. Some had ambitions for their people, others only for themselves. Some were extraordinary individuals, others were average or even weak. All held power, but not all were able or willing to exercise it fully. What all diKgosi did share, apart from their office, was a belief in the might of the colonial authority and a fear of disobedience of their own people.

During the colonial period, diKgosi were attacked and supported from both sides. White officials used different methods to restrict diKgosi from acting on their own. First they attempted to impose councils made up of trusted headmen and notables, who were then expected to direct the affairs of the morafe. Such attempts were blocked by many diKgosi with the support of the people, because the councils were regarded as disguises for giving power to wealthy uncles and other royal relatives of the Kgosi. During and after the time of Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, laws were introduced that created new bodies for sharing the Kgosi's power and authority. With popular backing, diKgosi resisted these measures as well. By the 1940s, however, complaints about diKgosi were becoming widespread among commoners and royals alike. Then white officials supported diKgosi. Colonial rule depended on strong chiefs to administer the Reserves. When nationalism gained momentum in the 1960s, however, the government did not use diKgosi to suppress it.

The view of the Protectorate from below

Among the thousands of people who lived under colonial rule, very few in the early years understood that they shared a common destiny. Because they were governed separately in Reserves, were permitted no voice beyond the kgotla and isolated from each other by distance and poor roads, their ideas about the larger world were communicated largely to fellow members of their respective merafe. DiKgosi and representatives of the large merafe met each other at least once a year in Mafikeng (or Gaberones) in the Native Advisory Council. These people discussed a wide number of issues, but they seldom reported back to their people. In the Bechuanaland

Protectorate, no town or centre emerged that could serve as a meeting ground for its many different peoples. Even the African residents of Lobatse and Francistown, the Protectorate's only urban areas, originated almost entirely from the immediate neighbourhood.

People were separated, too, by divisions within the Reserve. Uncles and relatives of the Kgosi formed a royal group that often clashed with commoners. In each Reserve, too, lived people who thought of themselves as separate from the Kgosi's group or who were treated like foreigners. The leaders of these bafaladi, or subordinate peoples, often clashed with diKgosi. And in each Reserve people of the dominant group looked down on and often mistreated others whom they called "malata", "makoba", "masarwa", "makalaka", "batlhanka", "matshweretshwere" or some other term of inferiority.

Race consciousness also entered the Protectorate. Long before colonial rule began, people of different colours had moved about and lived in many parts of the territory. White missionaries, adventurers, prospectors, traders, and officials of the Transvaal and Cape Governments were familiar with this country and some of its leaders. When passing through "Kgalagadi" (as Botswana was then often called by outsiders) or residing in one of the towns, they, like all other visitors and new residents, were guests of the Kgosi and subject to his authority. When the Protectorate was established, however, their status changed. Whites became subjects of the Crown and the responsibility of white officials. The Protectorate Government also practised race policies. Blacks were made third and fourth class passengers on the train, kept out of hotels, clubs and schools reserved for Whites, forced to live in slums when working in the towns, prevented from rising in the civil service, not allowed to buy trading licences and denied other rights and privileges enjoyed by white residents.

The Protectorate also limited what people could learn about each other. Government support of education was insignificant. Schools were few, and literacy was low. In the classrooms that existed, moreover, little in the way of formal knowledge about the Protectorate was taught. History and Geography, for example, used mainly European or white South African subject matter. The only map of the Protectorate anyone was likely to have seen would have been hanging on the wall of the District Commissioner's office!

The Protectorate comes into view

In spite of many obstacles in their way, people soon began to see the

Protectorate for what it was. Means were found to escape from many of the restrictions colonial rule created and to try and overcome the disadvantages caused by poverty, racial discrimination, illiteracy and isolation.

Desire for education was strong. Merafe spent much labour and money on building schools. Meeting the cost of qualified teachers' salaries, however, was often beyond their means, and until the late 1930s no school above the primary level existed in the Protectorate. Children from families who could afford it continued their education in South Africa, and at times the brighter sons of the morafe received bursaries to study there, too. Many of the men and women who took the lead in promoting change and criticizing colonial rule had been educated in South Africa. They and others who had become literate in primary schools were avid readers of South African and Southern Rhodesian newspapers, which often carried stories about the Protectorate and reported on outside events that affected Protectorate peoples.

Others learnt the hard way. Determined and desperate men and women violated Protectorate restrictions by leaving the Reserve and living or working elsewhere. They migrated to the towns in the Protectorate, South Africa (particularly the Witwatersrand) and Southern Rhodesia, where they became members of black urban communities. Others learnt about the world by going to war. Men from the Protectorate took part in both World Wars and served in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Many, many others were pulled from the Protectorate by the necessity of working as miners in South Africa and South West Africa. In nearly all cases, the individuals who went out had to leave their families and loved ones at home. And so, no matter what pleasures or excitement they experienced far away, their first obligation was to find a way of returning to the Reserve. Back home, their view of the Protectorate was usually much broader than the one they held before they had "gone on their travels".

Movement within the Protectorate was also common. Although colonial rule made it harder for communities to relocate themselves, groups of the BaKaa, OvaHerero, BaKgatla Mmanaana, BaKhurutshe, BaKalanga and others did just that. Countless individuals and families moved out of one Reserve and settled in another or, in fewer cases, on Crown Lands. In spite of the many restrictions imposed on Africans by the Protectorate, the territory never suffered under a "pass law system", as in South Africa. Many had travelled on the train and had a feel for the length and breadth of the country. Farflung contacts through family ties and travel also contributed to their knowledge of the territory and the region.

The people of the Protectorate accumulated a vast store of first-hand knowledge about the colonial system and how to "beat it". When restrictive laws were introduced, means were discovered to sidestep them. Hundreds of ways were employed to dodge or delay hut tax payment, to avoid conscripted labour, and to disguise political activity. The Government banned the selling of brandy and other spirits to Blacks, but brandy entered the Protectorate anyway (the police caught one Kgosi sneaking booze into town in the back of a hearse). After 1924 when South Africa banned the importation of low-weight cattle into the Union, cattlemen on both sides of the border, black and white, ran a well-oiled smuggling machine. Had they taken the time, these smugglers could have written a thick manual on how to "blind" the border police. One of their methods, used at night, worked as follows: ten to fifteen fence posts were carefully lifted and that section of the fence laid flat on the ground; tarps were put on top and the cattle allowed to pass over; the fence was carefully replaced and mabele and maize seed scattered throughout the area; at daybreak, birds swarmed in to eat the grain and obliterated all remaining spoor by mid-morning.

Fighting the colonial system was also done in the open. The people who could afford to employ lawyers quickly understood how useful they were in opposing the Government, and diKgosi. On many occasions, white lawyers in Mafikeng, Johannesburg and Bulawayo went to court on behalf of Africans. Groups were formed to raise money for this purpose and to promote their interests against Government restrictions. Though often led by educated men, their following could include women, workers, ex-migrant labourers, war veterans, headmen, petty traders and members of religious sects.

The common ground

While different groups opposed the Protectorate in different ways, people generally agreed long before independence about the purpose a central government should serve. In this respect, the people of the Protectorate belonged to a single community, even though they did not think of themselves as belonging to one until 1966. By and large, they expected their government to respect three principles: group recognition, cultural unity, and self-preservation.

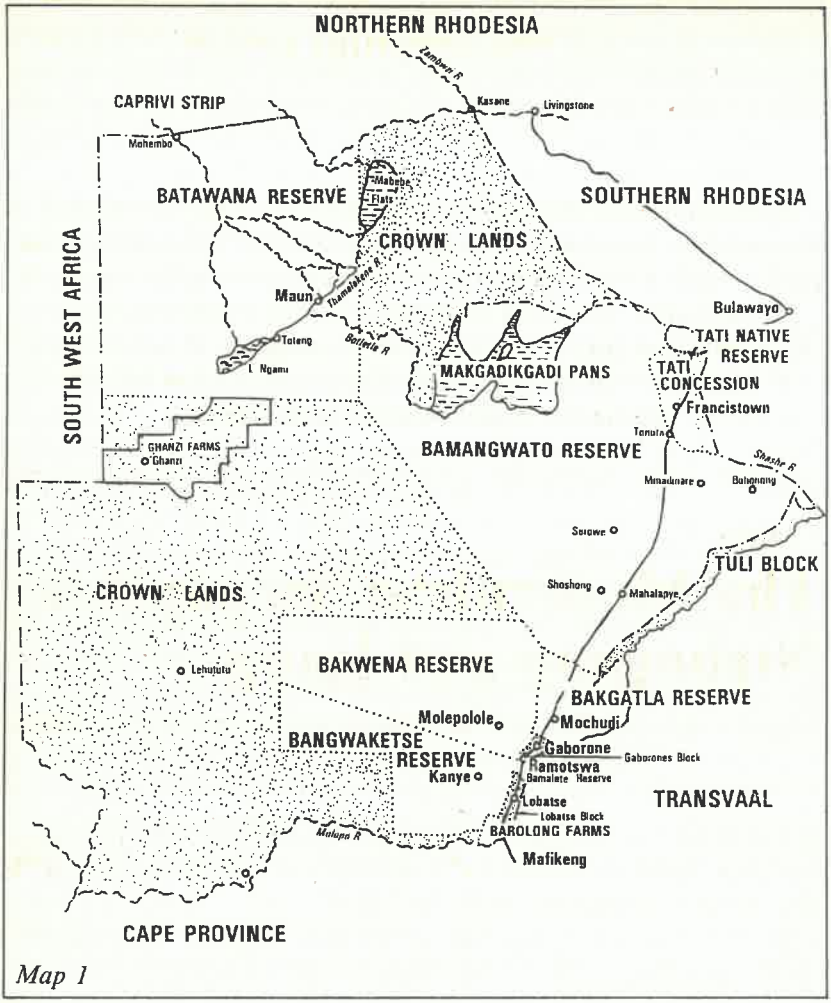
The most common complaint heard from each part of the Protectorate was the lack of recognition. To be regarded as being under a government meant being allowed to govern one's local affairs. The kgotla system, which had been introduced by

BaTswana overlords before the nineteenth century, was in the twentieth century demanded by each group in the territory as its best guarantee of equal treatment within the larger community. Even people who historically had no kgotla system realized its value in protecting their interests against attack from others. The kgotla served its members in other ways. It afforded men the opportunity to be present when important decisions were made (women fought for and won the same privilege before colonial rule had ended); it supported the practice of law in accordance with local traditions and changing circumstances; it gave each group its choice of representatives on councils governing at higher levels; and it gave all ward members legal status equal to members of other wards.

Cultural unity stood as another guarantee against domination. The territory consisted of many different cultures, and some people tried to separate themselves as distinct, independent groups. But separatism was never supported by large enough numbers to recommend it as an effective antidote to their ailments. SeTswana culture, on the other hand, held out more promise for those who wished to become part of a community in which their rights are respected. Throughout the colonial period, many people tried to become formal members of BaTswana merafe and take part in its affairs, even though they retained inferior social status. Thus, in every BaTswana town, wards of "foreigners" took root and became Setswanaized. Non-BaTswana entered BaTswana regiments, sat in dikgotla, intermarried with BaTswana, and learnt to speak fluent SeTswana. Self-help projects, carried out by the merafe, encouraged this process. Becoming part of SeTswana culture was nothing new in the history of this land, but in the colonial period, it became the surest method for individuals to safeguard their rights and improve prospects for their children.

BaTswana of whatever origin also knew that a government was needed in place of the Protectorate to keep its people free from South Africa. Throughout the colonial period, the fear that Bechuanaland might be handed over to South Africa was constant (at times, fear of being swallowed by Southern Rhodesia was almost as great). Officials assured diKgosi that transfer would never be carried out without first consulting them and their people, and BaTswana looked to Britain as their shield against South Africa, but few had full confidence that the British would always remain faithful. Many of the politicians who campaigned for votes at the time of independence had their personal ambitions for taking over the reins of government, but all shared with the public the knowledge that true independence meant freedom from the

Republic of South Africa, not just ending British rule.



Map 1

The Bechaunaland Protectorate: Reserves, Crown Lands and Blocks

SECTION I

DiKgosi and the African response to the colonial order

After the South African War, Protectorate diKgosi emerged as mediators between their people and a whole series of external forces. Their actions displayed a wide range of popular response to colonial rule, from modernism to neo-traditionalism. They reflected, too, a common will to moderate, if not control, the many economic and social changes associated with the Protectorate and its place in the region.

Chapter 1

The Modernists: Seepapitso, Ntebogang and Isang

DiKgosi such as Seepapitso, Ntebogang and Isang were part of the first generation of western-educated leaders in the Protectorate. In general they accepted colonial rule but sought to "modernize" their territories through a number of self-help projects. By exploiting such traditional forms of community mobilization as age-regimental labour, they involved their people in the building of schools, dams and roads. They also introduced to their people important features of the "new order". Seepapitso started the recording of public and legal kgotla minutes. Isang introduced tractors, boreholes, breeding bulls, cooperative marketing and row cultivation, while placing English and industrial skills in the Mochudi school curriculum. Ntebogang broke with the LMS and supported the Seventh Day Adventist missionaries, whose medical work in Gangwaketse spread to other districts of the Protectorate.

The "Modernists" were part of an old tradition. Even before colonial rule began, diKgosi such as Gaseitsiwe, Sechele and

Khama had begun to introduce such changes among their people, and this tradition, practised by Sebele, Linchwe, Bathoen and others, continued into the twentieth century. The "Modernists" did the same things, however, on a much larger scale. They also had the education to deal directly with the colonial Government and other institutions growing in and around the Protectorate (such as banks, courts and wholesale houses).

The diKgosi in this chapter, two men and one woman, were not the only "modernists", as may be seen in other parts of this book. They were, however, foremost among the early ones and set an example for others to follow. Each tried to "modernize" in a different way and for different reasons, and each met with a different response from the people. For every success, there was a failure. Like previous generations, those ruled by the "modernists" were accustomed to working together and willing to accept the hardship that stood between effort and reward. But often they resisted change for change's sake and suspected that the fruits of their labour would be eaten by the few.

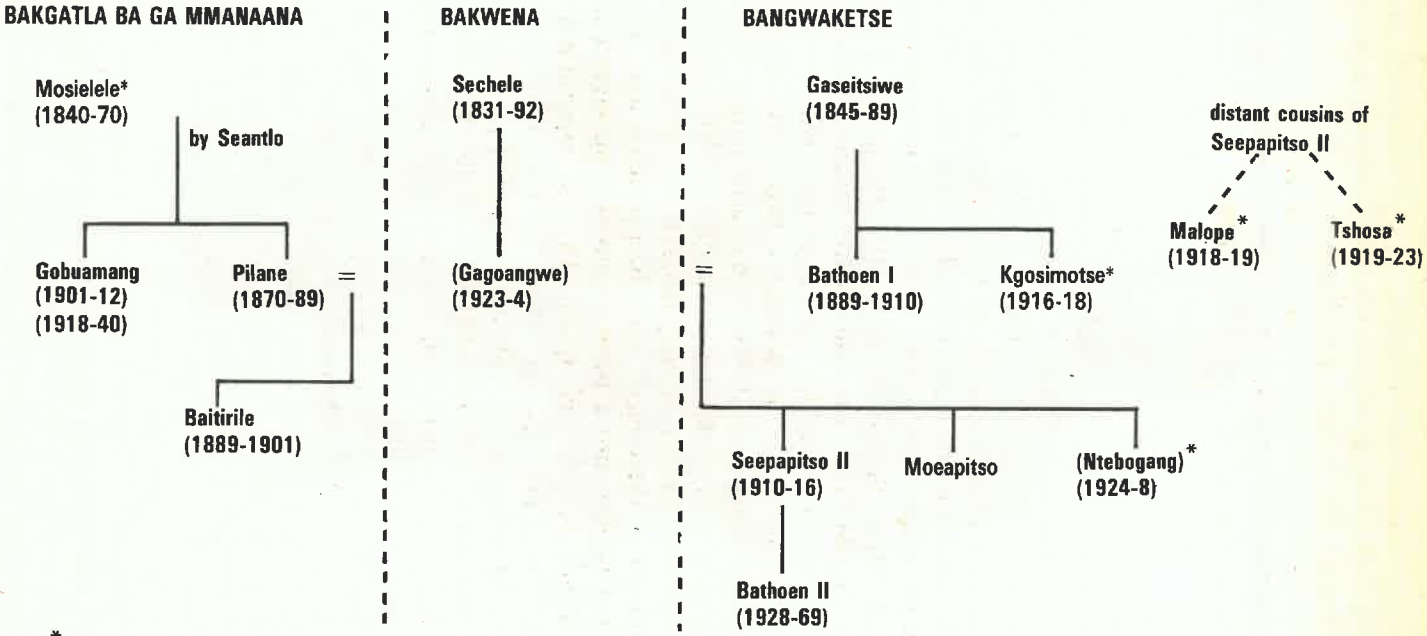
Seepapitso II, Kgosi of the BaNgwaketse 1910-1916

Seepapitso, son of Bathoen and grandson of Gaseitsiwe, was one of the most educated diKgosi in the early twentieth century, not only in Bechuanaland but in all of Southern Africa. He had received the finest schooling available to Africans at that time. Tutored as a child by LMS Moruti Mothowagae Motlogelwa and educated at Lovedale Institution, he spent seven additional years as an apprentice to Bathoen I, in preparation for his duties as the future Kgosi. No Kgosi in the entire colonial period was more completely groomed for his position, and few were more eager to rule when the moment arrived. After taking his father's place, Seepapitso quickly asserted himself and embarked on a large programme of improvements. Yet, his achievements fell far short of his goals. His reign was too brief. Six years after being installed as his father's successor in the Kanye kgotla, he was assassinated in that very place by his own brother.

Seepapitso is still remembered for the many new things he tried to achieve. He was the Protectorate's first "modernist" Kgosi, one who attempted to blend western ideas into a traditional setting. Seepapitso's notion of progress was to use machines and methods brought by the white men for the strengthening of Ngwaketse culture and increasing the wealth of the BaNgwaketse. Like other "modernists", Seepapitso believed in preserving SeTswana law and

custom and protecting his people from unwanted changes. To Seepapitso modernization did not mean revolution. He accepted colonial rule, was active in the LMS church and believed in exercising his full authority as Kgosi.

SEEPAPITSO'S GENEALOGY



KEY: * = Motshwareledi

NOTE: *Gagoangwe was married to Pilane when she eloped with Bathoen. Children from both marriages succeeded to bogosi.*

Other diKgosi before Seepapitso had thought along these lines, but Seepapitso was the first who had the educational tools with which to understand and try to control modern changes within the Protectorate. His written and spoken English were fluent, and his talents in dealing directly with the colonial administration and other Europeans in the territory exceeded those of any of his subjects. He was young, but he had the confidence of a man of ability. He impressed Protectorate officials with his brilliance as well as his polished manner, just as he ruled his people without fear or hesitation.

Part of Seepapitso's supreme bearing was founded in his rich pedigree. Undisputed heir to the BaNgwaketse bogosi, Seepapitso was also well connected through his mother to the highest levels of BaTswana royalty. Mohumagadi Gagoangwe was the daughter of Sechele, long-reigning Kgosi of the Bakwena, and sister of Sebele, who succeeded Sechele in 1892. She was also the estranged wife and widow of Pilane, head of the BaKgatla-Mmanaana of Mosopa and mother to Baitirile, who succeeded Pilane. Gagoangwe was, accordingly, the daughter, sister, widow, wife and mother of diKgosi (before bearing Bathoen's two sons, Seepapitso and Moeapitso, Gagoangwe delivered him a daughter, Ntebogang).

With such solid credentials to support him along with a bookish education and wealth, Seepapitso assumed power as a scholar-monarch in a three-piece suit. Bespectacled and dignified, he converted bogosi into a form of business management in which public affairs were strictly organized and all important proceedings recorded on paper. Kgotla, lebatla and pitso meetings became regular and frequent, and all were recorded in detailed minutes. Seepapitso and his secretary, Peter Kgasa, also kept careful records of the dates, the sequence and substance of all items discussed or announced at such meetings.

Seepapitso was a prolific law-giver who left a complete record of all his decrees. Other diKgosi, including his father, had made laws, but Seepapitso recorded them and thereby created modern legal documents. In 1913, he compiled a code of melao reaching back through Bathoen's days all the way to Gaseitsiwe's. In the process, old decrees were resurrected and made part of contemporary practice. Seepapitso thought of himself as a "new man", but he wanted his people to cherish and preserve old traditions. Though a staunch Christian, he opposed LMS converts who used their religion to avoid customary practice. Those who had refused to pay bogadi were brought before the kgotla and ordered to pay. He also put an end to easy divorces, which were becoming common, and

required all divorce proceedings to be carried out in the main kgotla, under his authority.

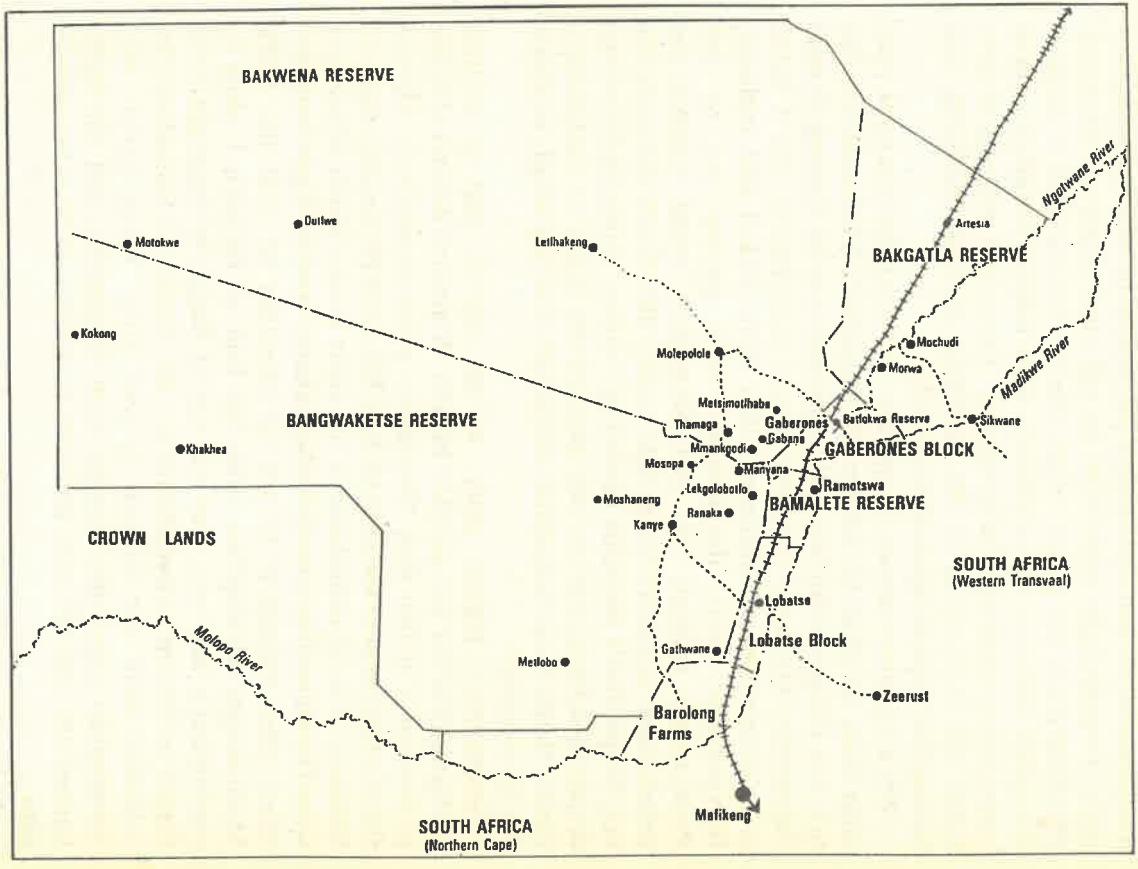
Seepapitso introduced a stern code of conduct in BaNgwaketse affairs, and he won the support of the elders in the process. The Kgosi believed in the exercise of power, but he believed as strongly in action in accordance with public opinion. Before issuing a decree, he made certain he had firm backing.

> Chatting with men round the kgotla fire, he would ... casually mention some new practice that seemed to be spreading, and ask if anything should be done about it. During the next few days or weeks he would reflect over the views expressed. Then if he wanted to pursue the matter, he would raise it at an assembly. He would state the problem, and ask for suggestions how to cope with it, alternatively he might first warn the people about a practice he disliked, and subsequently issue a decree if the warning went unheeded.

The hallmark of Seepapitso's rule was frequent and wide consultation. Not only did he rule in the interest of the morafe, but the morafe itself decided and participated in that rule all the time.

With the BaNgwaketse behind him Seepapitso embarked on numerous projects. Throughout his reign, mephato were put to work constructing and maintaining roads, repairing dams, clearing mogau and searching for matimela. One of the most important tasks was the marking of boundaries. The BaNgwaketse, who were hemmed in on all sides, feared the encroachment of others. In 1912, mephato helped mark the southern boundary. The next year they dug a well at Mahubaakgama, adjacent to the Barolong farms, and Seepapitso ordered the people of Manare ward, under Selerio Kgopo, to settle there and guard the boundary. In 1915 more wards were dispatched to establish settlements around GaNgwaketse: the Chibana ward to Kokong and Sekokotla ward to Khakhea in the west and Makaba ward to Gathwane and Nthwalang ward to Dagawana in the southeast.

At the capital, Seepapitso busied himself introducing changes. The Makgodumo dam was built in 1913 and three boreholes were sunk around Kanye. For the first time anywhere in the Protectorate, people drew their water from standpipes. Schools were improved, and better qualified teachers found. Seepapitso pressured parents to keep their children in school and encouraged their performance by regularly visiting them and introducing academic prizes and sports competitions. The school levy, introduced by Bathoen I, was increased to upgrade education, and new schools were built at Manyana and Macheng. Seepapitso persuaded the Government to



Map 2 Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Bakgatla and Bamalete Reserves

help the BaNgwaketse hire a white medical doctor, and in 1914 Dr. Butterfield began his practice in Kanye, one of the first BaTswana towns to have such services in colonial times (Serowe had a doctor in 1909).

To pay for all these improvements, Seepapitso introduced numerous levies and encouraged his people to raise the necessary cash. Townspeople were told to sell such items as firewood, thatching grass and bones, while others were expected to work as transport riders or sign contracts with labour recruiters, whom Seepapitso invited into GaNgwaketse. The money paid into the levy funds was kept safely in the Standard Bank at Mafikeng, and Seepapitso kept an up-to-date account.

When it came to money, Seepapitso was strict. Into the bank went large sums raised as his ten per cent commission for collecting hut tax. Few diKgosi rounded up this annual tax more thoroughly than Seepapitso. His ward headmen served as collectors, and if found lax, incompetent or dishonest, they were sacked and replaced. BaNgwaketse were discouraged from paying tax to any Protectorate officials, so that Seepapitso could increase the commission and force his people to pay their levies alongside the tax. Seepapitso's methods caused grievances, particularly among certain headmen, but no one accused the Kgosi of mishandling funds. Neither was Seepapitso suspected of acting simply to please the Europeans.

Seepapitso's highest duty, as he saw it, was to control GaNgwaketse for the people's benefit. If anyone interfered in the performance of that duty, Seepapitso acted immediately. He was the most prominent member of the LMS, even playing the organ on Sundays, but he considered it his right to say which missionary would be allowed to serve in GaNgwaketse. And the Kgosi banished those who attempted to set up churches to rival the LMS. Mothowagae Motlogelwa, who fell foul of Bathoen I when he established a new sect, was sent out of Kanye by Seepapitso and forced to live in Lekgolobotlo on the border of GamaLete (his followers were not allowed to join him). White traders who misbehaved came into conflict with Seepapitso, and the Kgosi banned the sale of cattle and corn to traders without his permission.

At heart, however, Seepapitso was a pro-Government man. He rarely disagreed with Assistant Resident Magistrate E.H. Merrivale Drury, the first officer posted to Kanye in 1913, and gained a reputation in Mafikeng for loyalty and dedication. In 1915, Seepapitso underscored his service to the Crown when he raised a

war levy and sent hundreds of BaNgwaketse to serve in World War I. Seepapitso supported British rule in part because he feared incorporation into the Union of South Africa. In 1908 Bathoen had reminded the British of their obligation to keep the Protectorate free from South African rule, and in 1912 Seepapitso did likewise.

Seepapitso's acceptance of the British was common in that day and certainly did not make him a stooge. He is better understood as a Kgosi committed fully to the use of his powers in order to bring about improvements among the BaNgwaketse. Bogosi had been made part of the colonial administration by his forefathers, and Seepapitso could not think of opposing colonial rule without giving up his chance of helping his people to enjoy a higher standard of living. Dikgosi then could not serve their people otherwise.

Servant as he was, Seepapitso aroused hatred and jealousy among some of his subjects. Among them were uncles and headmen he had removed for failing to carry out orders. Also included among his enemies was Moeapitso, his younger brother. Moeapitso, some believe, longed for bogosi himself and became easy prey to the gossip and intrigue of those with grievances against Seepapitso. Others think that he, being one of ordinary ability, felt humiliated by his older brother's extraordinary talents and achievements. It is impossible to determine why, at any rate, Moeapitso should have thought it necessary to kill his older brother.

One evening, shortly before dusk, Seepapitso met his fate. He was seated in the kgotla, discussing matters with several elders, as was his common practice. During their conversation, Moeapitso quietly moved up to the manato palisades very close to where his brother sat, perched his rifle on the wood so that the barrel pointed into the kgotla, took aim at Seepapitso and pulled the trigger. The bullet, which entered his left side, lifted Seepapitso off the stool, burst through his body and left him bleeding profusely in a heap on the kgotla floor. He died almost immediately.

Thus did the bogosi of Seepapitso, a young man whose life was full of plans for his people, end a mere six years after it had begun.

Ntebogang, Motshwareledi of the BaNgwaketse (1924-1928)

When a Kgosi-to-be was still young, and no man could be counted on to act responsibly in his place, a grandmother, mother or aunt was always ready to fill the breach. Bathoen, the elder son of Seepaptiso, was only eight years old when his father was murdered. While the BaNgwaketse waited until he was mature enough to be installed, the interests of the lelapa of Bathoen I and the bogosi of

Bathoen II were safe-guarded by two strong women. One was Mohumagadi Gagoangwe, Seepapitso's mother, the "one-eyed Queen". The second was Gagoangwe's eldest daughter, Ntebogang. In 1923, after seven troubled years under three regents, Gagoangwe installed herself as Motshwareledi. And before she died of cancer a year later, she named Ntebogang to succeed her. Gagoangwe's daughter restored many of the policies established by Bathoen I and Seepapitso, launched important public improvements, gave Bathoen II time for formal education and in other ways prepared the ground for a smooth transition to the bogosi of her nephew.

Gagoangwe, hard as motswere, was guardian of bogosi as received by her husband and passed, through her, to Seepapitso and Bathoen II. When Moeapitso was tried by the British and found guilty of Seepapitso's murder, Gagoangwe demanded that her son be executed. Moeapitso was hanged. Gagoangwe then remained in the background while two royal uncles, Kgosimotse and Malope, ruled briefly before dying in office. They were followed by another, Tshosa Sebego, whose regency was plagued with troubles. In 1923, Tshosa and Peter Kgasa, Seepapitso's old secretary and the man who had kept the administration going since the assassination, were believed to have stolen thousands of pounds. Gagoangwe called the two men "thieves", and at a public kgotla, both were removed from office.

Then, in spite of Tshosa's protests, Gagoangwe took his place. Tired of corruption and eager for a return to the days of Seepapitso, the morafe accepted Gagoangwe's claim. So did the British. Gagoangwe, wrote the Resident Magistrate in Kanye, "possesses remarkable intelligence — once she grasps a thing she never loses touch of it". Three headmen were appointed to assist the Mohumagadi, who by then was approaching seventy years and was declining in health. In spite of her will to rule in the place of her grandson, then at school in Lovedale, she was dead within a year. On her deathbed, however, Gagoangwe was still strong enough to insist that she alone choose her successor, rather than leave the matter to the morafe. She named Ntebogang, and no protest was heard.

Ntebogang was made of her mother's stuff. She was prepared to rule, feared no man and was devoted to Bathoen II's future. She entered botshwareledi with more difficulties than faced Gagoangwe, and though she had little time in office, her strength was sufficient to overcome them. She spent only four years as regent, but her reign was remarkably successful. She put her stamp on the regency not only as a devoted caretaker of Bathoen' stool,

but as a "progressive' BaNgwaketse ruler in her own right.

Ntebogang was one of the few female members of an elite group of progressive-minded BaTswana royals. Born in Kanye in 1882 as the child of Bathoen and related through her mother to BaKwena bogosi. Ntebogang was married into the Ratshosa family of BaNgwato. In her day, Ntebogang received more formal education than did other women, even royal women, and was raised in a strict, Christian manner. Like the men of the royal households wherever she stayed, Ntebogang thought of herself as a standard-bearer of modern culture and as a leader. As one who enjoyed high status, she not only had less desire than others to accept things as they were but also had more courage to experiment with the new. While her mother was regent, for example, Ntebogang left the LMS and became a member of the Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA) which she continued to promote during her political career.

Ntebogang's strength and courage helped her face the very weak position she occupied as Motshwareledi in 1924. The LMS-men who dominated the kgotlædisliked the SDA which had been refused permission of entry by the large BaKgatla Mmanaana community at Mosopa. Ntebogang was also disadvantaged because she was a widow and received no help from the Ratshosa family. Ntebogang's principal supporter, Gagoangwe, was dead. And regent or not, Ntebogang was a woman.

Ntebogang was assisted by six councillors, all men. Three she inherited from Gagoangwe, the others she chose herself. Though the councillors generally supported her and helped organize projects, Ntebogang handed real authority to the one councillor ready to do her bidding. Kgampu Kamodi of Kamodi ward, and SDA convert, became Ntebogang's lieutenant and ran the kgotla. During Ntebogang's regency. Kgampu acquired considerable power. Ultimately, his ambition and alleged dishonesty spoiled Ntebogang's name. Some claim, perhaps out of spite and jealousy, that he was her lover.

Ntebogang, herself honest, worked hard to restore respect to bogosi. Of particular importance were her efforts to combat the large swarms of locusts, which threatened the BaNgwaketse with starvation. With her councillors, she oversaw an extensive well-digging campaign to provide large amounts of water needed for mixing chemical sprays and for the hundreds of oxen pulling the wagons of the anti-locust teams.

Ntebogang also used her SDA connections to establish medical care centres throughout GaNgwaketse. In the 1920s the SDA established a successful medical mission in GaNgwaketse. At

Kanye, the Protectorate's first clinics were introduced, and others were placed in Manyana and Lehututu so that people in remote areas could have access to western medicine and treatment. Before Gagoangwe died, the SDA built a hospital in Kanye, and during Ntebogang's rule, anti-SDA feeling in GaNgwaketse largely disappeared. Only in Mosopa, where serious political divisions had been healed by eliminating non-LMS religions, did the SDA remain unwelcome. Ntebogang also became popular, not only because the SDA did good work, but because she enforced a strict code of conduct that was acceptable to LMS followers and the public in general. She is remembered, for example, as one who revived the ban on the sale of khadi.

Outside GaNgwaketse, Ntebogang also made her presence felt. Ntebogang was the first woman to sit in the "Native Advisory Council" and one of its most outspoken members. As with Seepapitso, the threat of incorporation was of great concern to Ntebogang, as her speeches in the NAC show. When the Government planned to employ South Africans during the locust campaign, Ntebogang objected. If such men dug wells or discovered minerals in the process, they could claim the land as their own. She got her way, and the work was done by Protectorate employees. Ntebogang found other uses for the NAC. Through it she obtained money for greatly expanding the piped-water scheme in Kanye and for setting up bull camps, important projects which later her nephew continued and expanded.

Ntebogang also became an accomplished arbitrator in squabbles among BaTswana royals. In 1926, when the Ratshosa brothers were banned from GammaNgwato by Tshekedi, Ntebogang helped to quiet the conflict. With Bathoen II's permission (she often referred important matters to him, knowing he would inherit the consequences), Ntebogang provided political refuge to the Ratshosa wives, MmaKhama and Baboni, on condition that they use Kanye as their temporary home and not as a base for future political intrigue. Her neutrality was accepted by Tshekedi, who later helped Ntebogang retrieve 150 of her cattle which had been seized by Johnnie Ratshosa.

Ntebogang, Tshekedi and her first cousin, Sebele II of the BaKwena, also cooperated in 1927, when the Protectorate Government first began seriously to threaten the powers of diKgosi. They decided to take action after the Government passed a series of proclamations affecting customary law and held inquiries into the treatment of "BaSarwa". Rather than protest in the NAC, where Jules Ellenberger, the Resident Commissioner, could politely

record and then quietly ignore the matter, the three drew up a petition and sent it over Ellenberger's head. They mailed it directly to the Earl of Athlone, the High Commissioner. The petition angered Ellenberger and made Ntebogang, as well as the other two young "upstarts", unpopular figures in Mafikeng.

The following year the British were happy to see Ntebogang hand over to Bathoen II. The petition was one reason, as were the growing number of complaints heard in GaNgwaketse about Kgampu. Towards the end of 1928, Bathoen II returned from Lovedale and became the first Kgosi since Seepapitso's death in 1916. Then 20 years old, Bathoen entered a bogosi that had survived the chaos and confusion of the 1916-1923 period largely through the efforts of the two female pillars of his family, Gagoangwe and Ntebogang. At the installation ceremony, Ntebogang offered him the following thoughts:

> Rich and poor are presented to you, liars are also presented to you. Whatever he be, everyone is yours, they are like the wives of one man — wives of one man never love each other and these wives of yours will be like that.

Wisdom, along with her strength, was Ntebogang's gift to the BaNgwaketse.

Isang Pilane, Motshwareledi of the Bakgatla Kgafela (1921-1929)

Isang was a man of many strong qualities. The elders today remember Isang as a "powerful" Kgosi, a "gifted" kgotla speaker and one who had "boundless energy" and a "colossal memory". Older BaKgatla also take pride in what they accomplished under Isang's leadership. They speak of the large school they built (now Phuthadikobo Museum) and of the many children who acquired an education because of Isang's efforts. In Isang's time, the first boreholes were sunk, breeding bulls were purchased, good traditions such as bogwera and bojale were revived, mephato were used in many ways to help the people, and a strict code of conduct among young people was enforced.

Like strong people of other times and places, Isang was also feared. He believed that as Kgosi he should force others to work for and obey him. Isang took no time to persuade his people. The elders use such words as "autocrat" and "disciplinarian" to describe him. They think of him as "hard", "harsh", "severe" and "quick tempered". Isang flogged many people in his time, some say too often and too much. "His hand", complained one man who lay in

the hospital after Isang had beat him, 'was too heavy".

One reason Isang ruled so harshly is that he believed his people lagged too far behind the times and needed pushing. Isang was much better educated than other BaKgatla. He was also very westernized. He spoke excellent English, wore three-piece suits, lived in a metal-roofed house (it still stands near the present kgotla) with a study and library, wrote hundreds of letters and subscribed to various magazines. Isang was also very ambitious. He wanted power and he wanted to hold it. He was a suspicious man, who was

Isang Pilane

cruel to those he thought were opposing him. He was also "hungry" for cattle and used his power to increase his personal herd.

Isang was a Motshwareledi, not a Kgosi. He had only a short time to accomplish his destiny. He hoped that, by forcing the BaKgatla to accept his ways, he could get them to agree to keeping him as Kgosi. For a time the colonial Government was on Isang's side. They liked "chiefs" who ruled strictly in their "Reserves", cooperated with the Government and introduced western ways.

Isang was born in Mochudi in 1886. He was the second son of Linchwe Kgamanyane Pilane (Linchwe I). During Linchwe's long reign (1875-1920), the BaKgatla established themselves as a powerful morafe in the Protectorate. Isang and his elder brother, Kgafela (b. 1880), were educated in Setswana and English by Thomas Phiri, an early MoKgatla evangelist working for the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) at Sikwane. Later the two boys attended Zonnebloem College, an Anglican school at the foot of Table Mountain in Cape Town.

Linchwe prepared his sons to become future leaders of the BaKatla. After returning from Cape Town, Kgafela sat in the kgotla with his father while Isang worked at the cattle post. But in 1914, while Linchwe was still Kgosi, Kgafela died at the age of thirty-four. Kgafela's wife, Seingwaeng, had already born a son, Molefi, and after Kgafela died she delivered a second son Mmusi. Isang then became Linchwe's secretary and helped his father carry many of the burdens of bogosi.

Then only twenty-eight years, Isang was already confident and bold. Linchwe recognized his son's talents and sent him to South Africa to perform two difficult tasks. In 1917 word came of the death of Linchwe's brother, Ramono, who ruled over the BaKgatla of Moruleng (Saulsport) in Rustenburg district. Isang rode his horse southeast to Saulsport to settle Ramono's estate and to oversee the appointment of Ramono's successor. Isang completed this tedious and delicate job with great success. He also attended a hearing of the "Natives Land Commission" in Rustenburg and spoke eloquently (in English) before a panel of hostile white commissioners. Then, in 1918, Linchwe sent Isang to Pretoria to clear up the title deeds for all the land owned by the Saulsport BaKgatla. As usual, Isang returned with the job well done.

Isang's experiences in the Transvaal hardened him against the Afrikaner. In 1918 Isang quarrelled with the DRC missionaries in Mochudi and left the church. Isang and a young teacher, Amos Kgamanyane Pilane, tried to establish an "Ethiopian" church (i.e. African-controlled), but Linchwe blocked their attempt. Linchwe

feared that Isang wanted to expel the DRC in order to weaken his powerful uncles, Segale and Komane, who headed the DRC BaKgatla group.

Linchwe also believed that Isang wanted to seize bogosi for himself. Isang rejected Seingwaeng, whose house he was supposed to enter after Kgafela's death, and rumours spread that Isang was trying to kill Molefi and Mmusi. The old Kgosi therefore refused to teach Isang the art of rainmaking. Instead Linchwe passed on his knowledge to his eldest daughter, Kgomotso (Kgabyana), so that she could teach Molefi when he was old enough. When Isang found this out, much bitterness grew among Linchwe's descendants.

In 1920, when old Linchwe suffered a stroke, Isang made his bid to become Kgosi. He was challenged by Ramorotong, nephew of Segale and son of the late Maganelo, who once challenged Linchwe for the bogosi (Maganelo was born before Linchwe, but his mother was not recognized as the great wife of Kgamanyane). In a great showdown at an armed letsholo in the veld, Isang was accepted by the Bakgatla. In early 1921 he was sworn in to serve as regent until Molefi, then a rowdy youth of eleven, was old enough to be installed as the true Kgosi (old Linchwe eventually died in 1924). True to form, Isang demanded that the leopard skin be placed on his shoulders, but the elders insisted that the skin be placed on the Kgosi's stool. He could sit on it and "keep it warm" for Molefi.

Once in power, Isang wasted no time in behaving like a true Kgosi. In the newly-formed Native Advisory Council, Isang quickly became the leader of the diKgosi of all the southern merafe. With his gift for speech and forthright manner, Isang dominated the Council sessions. Isang was full of ideas. He called for improvements in water through borehole drilling, in African trading rights and especially in education. Isang secured a large annual grant of money for teachers' salaries in the Kgatleng and announced his plans for the erection of a new school in Mochudi. Isang wanted his own people to meet most of the cost, but he expected the government to assist. "Progress", Isang declared, "means heavier expenditure".

The building of "Mochudi National School" in 1923 under Isang's supervision was a great achievement. For purchasing building materials and hiring skilled artisans, Isang taxed his people or sent them to work in the South African mines. In that way the BaKgatla contributed £3,000 (worth over P50,000 in today's money). Then Isang ordered them to do the work. BaKgatla made the bricks (300,000 in all!), mixed the cement, and carried materials from kilometres around. Men, women and children, rich and poor, laboured for months. Everything had to be carried to the top of the

hill, including water, sand and bricks, even huge pillars. By mid-year the work was finished. The school had eight classrooms and an assembly hall. At the time Mochudi School was the largest single structure in the entire Bechuanaland Protectorate.

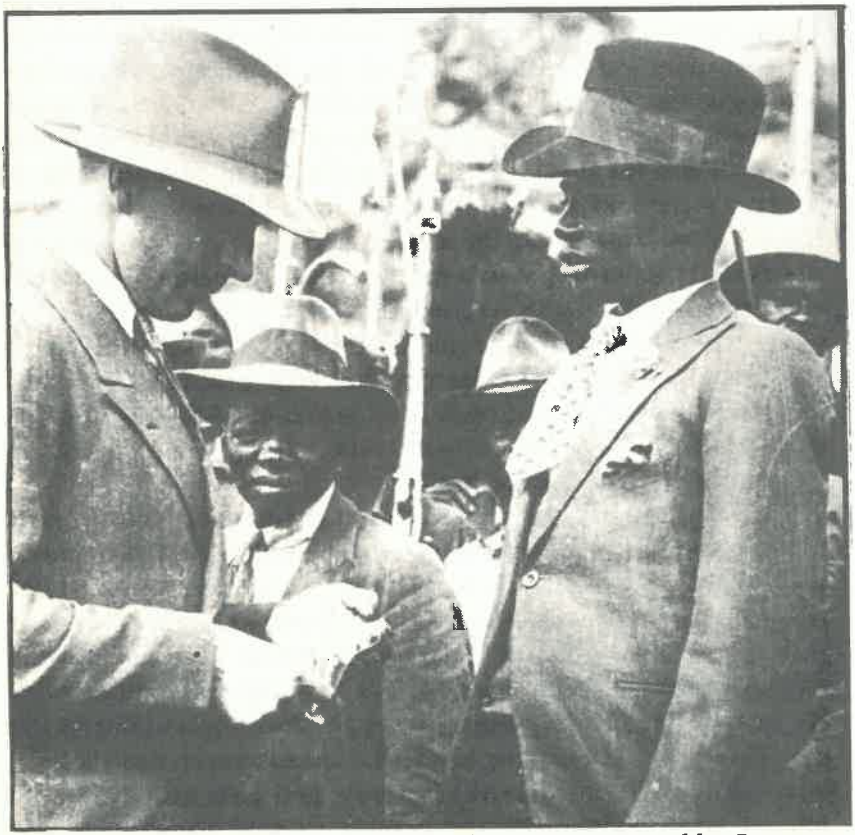
Into this school went the children of families all over the Kgatleng. Isang especially wanted boys to attend, because only girls were going to school during Linchwe's time. Isang pressured father after father to send his eldest son to classes. When money was the problem, Isang paid fees from his pocket. Isang was concerned about youngsters, girls as well as boys, running off to Johannesburg for work. If they learned English and Maths, along with agricultural and veterinary or domestic skills in schools, Isang believed they could remain at home and increase the wealth of their families and the BaKgatla as a whole.

Isang worried about "this unconquerable beast the white man calls civilization". If they did not learn the new ways, Isang feared the BaKgatla would lose control over their own lives. Isang therefore introduced all sorts of things and devices to increase his people's production and wealth. In addition to practical schooling, Isang encouraged the adoption of the double-furrow plough, irrigation, maize and bean cultivation, bull breeding and castration, and drilling boreholes for the supply of water for the people of Mochudi and for cattle in outlying areas. Isang paid attention to public saving and tried to stop the flow of money out of the Kgatleng. He tried to ban the importation of luxury goods, such as hats and silk stockings. BaKgatla needed his permission to buy expensive goods such as wagons, horses or guns. Under Isang all grain not eaten by the people themselves was sold through a "syndicate" controlled by Isang. This kept profits in BaKgatla hands and away from the traders. When South Africa banned the importation of African-owned cattle, Isang found ways of smuggling them across the border.

Isang's hopes lay with the youth. To restore their knowledge of traditions and teach them discipline he revived bogwera and bojale, which had been banned by Linchwe, although to calm DRC converts and missionaries, Isang did not include "white bogwera" — circumcision — in the initiation. Mephato were put to work digging wells, collecting stray cattle, and doing other public work. He encouraged girls to progress through education and introduced the "Wayfarers" (something like Girl Guides) to keep them actively involved in community work. For boys and girls who did well in school, Isang encouraged the parents to send them for further education in South Africa. Sometimes Isang paid the fees himself.

On holidays, returning scholars from Tiger Kloof and Lovedale reported to the kgotla. The boys were expected to attend kgotla regularly and learn history and customary law from the discussions of the elders.

In spite of Isang's efforts, the BaKgatla grew weary of the hardship his ambition placed on them. They disliked the extra taxes and levies he imposed for public projects, and the mephato tired of interrupting their everyday lives to do Isang's bidding. Isang also troubled the BaKgatla with his strict code of behaviour. He rode his horse around Mochudi at night chastising and whipping noisy town dwellers. And the kgotla became a place where too many people were being beaten. The drinking of beer was banned, as was the buying of liquor. Under Isang, life was all work and no play. Isang's regency was also a time of severe drought, and all the boreholes Isang drilled did not make the people forget that he was ignorant of rainmaking. As Molefi grew into a young man, resistance to Isang increased.



Molefi at the time of his installation being interviewed by Laurens van der Post

Those against Isang included Kgabyana, his sister, and Kgafela's widow, Seingwaeng, who believed Isang was trying to kill Molefi and Mmusi with witchcraft. Behind them stood Kgafela's mephato, MaKuka, together with many of Linchwe's brothers and many old men in their mephato — MaJanko, MaNtwane, MaTlakana. Almost all the ward heads were members of these regiments. Isang was supported by his own mophato, MaChechele, some of the better educated young men and several of the junior lapa of his grandfather, Kgamanyane. In 1929, Isang realized he and his supporters were greatly outnumbered. Fearing for his life, Isang agreed to step down, even though Molefi publicly said he was not ready to become Kgosi. The BaKgatla insisted, and the colonial government had begun to change their minds about Isang. As one old colonial official remarked, Isang was a "master of intrigue and a bully".

On 14 October 1929, the leopard skin was taken from the stool and draped around Molefi's shoulders. Young Molefi was then only twenty years old. Isang, who became his advisor, was forty-three. He was full of experience, angry with his enemies for driving him out of bogosi and convinced that young Molefi would fail as a Kgosi. Isang remained a powerful force in the Kgatleng, much to Molefi's regret. "Isang is crafty", noted the same official, "intensely jealous and quick to anger — Isang is a fighter". For the next seven years, Molefi and the BaKgatla suffered while Isang, this "remarkable man" and foremost progressive Kgosi of his time, fought to regain the position Molefi took away (see chapter 5).

Chapter 2

The Neo-Traditionalist: Sebele II of the Bakwena, 1918-1939

Kelebantse Sebele a Sechele II, known as Sebele II, was a popular Kgosi of the BaKwena, but his neo-traditionalism angered colonial administrators. In 1931 the British detained him and, without trial or consultation with the BaKwena, made him a political prisoner at Ghanzi, where he spent the last eight years of his twenty-one-year reign. Sebele II's rule generated much opposition among some of his subjects as well as from the Government. His removal from bogosi, however, was deeply resented throughout the Kweneng. Efforts to

Kgosi Sebele II

restore Kgosi Sebele were attempted, but they were suppressed. Sebele's reign resulted in much discord, and to this day elders recalling his bogosi are deeply divided in their opinions. Many would concede, however, that much of the controversy which still surrounds Sebele stems from his desire to rule as a "neo-traditionalist".

Sebele and his opponents

Sebele's neo-traditionalism aroused feelings early in his reign, when he upheld bogwera, rainmaking and polygamy. Such practices appealed to the majority of his people but offended many local Christians. Among the latter group were much of the Bakwena elite: royal relatives and high-ranking members of the major sections of Molepolole. Elite members dominated the lay leadership of the LMS Church (since 1967 the UCCSA), which they regarded as their "National Church". The British also recognized certain members of this elite as the Kweneng's "leading headmen", who were entitled to play an important role in BaKwena affairs. Sebele's neo-traditionalism challenged the status and position of the BaKwena elite, who felt threatened by the way in which Sebele promoted commoners. Sebele's supporters maintained that this policy accorded with the tradition, Kgosi ke Kgosi ka batho, rather than just by his relatives. Years before Sebele II was installed as Kgosi, the conflict between leading headmen and commoners, as well as between neo-traditional and Christian attitudes had already begun. During his reign, however, the conflict proved impossible to contain.

Throughout the colonial era, neo-traditionalists such as Sebele were often stereotyped as "backward" individuals who were out of step with the march of "civilization". Colonial administrators readily accepted these stereotypes. For one thing, they liked working with Christian elites such as the one in Molepolole for the purpose of collecting tax and ruling strictly. For another, by branding the Kgosi as one opposed to change and progress, they could disguise their own dislike of Sebele, who openly resented colonial interference in BaKwena affairs.

Sebele was anything but backward. He was, in fact, one of the most cosmopolitan men in the Protectorate. His background was unique among diKgosi of the time. Though he dropped out of secondary school, Sebele was fairly well educated. Among BaKwena dikgosi, he was the first to be literate in English. Even more important, Sebele gained valuable experience outside the

Protectorate. For several years he worked as a clerk in the Witwatersrand mines and witnessed the squalid and violent conditions of compound life. With the freedom and money to visit bustling, growing Johannesburg, he also moved among a new community of urbanized Africans and tasted the pleasures of big city life. After World War I broke out, Sebele and other BaKwena enlisted in the South African Army and served as labourers on the battlefields of Europe. Sebele shared the miseries of that ugly war with men of all colours and from around the globe. Also, he and other black recruits from Southern Africa were confined to special compounds even when off duty and were commanded by often cruel white officers. When some black troops (not from the Protectorate) mutinied against these conditions, all black units were discharged early. Before departing Europe, however, Corporal Sebele was given the honour of being presented before the British Royal family, then on a visit to Paris.

On the whole, these varied experiences made Sebele a sceptic of "white civilization". After his return to Molepolole, Sebele freely voiced his doubts to those who came in contact with him, blacks and whites alike.

The Borakalalo faction and the British

After Sebele returned from war to take up bogosi, he inherited many problems. His father, Kealeboga (Sechele II, 1911-1918), died leaving the morafe polarized by his dispute with some of the Christians. Sechele II threatened the elite's LMS monopoly when he allowed the Anglican church into the Kweneng. Some leading Christian headmen, encouraged by LMS missionaries, fought back by petitioning the British to remove the Kgosi. As tensions mounted, Sechele II then moved his home to Ntsweng, on top of the hill overlooking Molepolole and where his grandfather, Sechele I, had once lived. Many followed Sechele II to Ntsweng. The anti-Sechele faction remained behind, down in the Borakalalo Valley, five kilometres away. Their compounds stood next to the main LMS church and the local headquarters of the Resident Magistrate.

In 1916 the Borakalalo faction got the British to establish the first BaKwena "Tribal Council". Sechele's brothers from Borakalalo dominated the Council, which in turn tried to control Sechele. Before Sebele's father died, he succeeded in getting the British to abolish the Council. But the residents of Molepolole remained divided, between Ntsweng and Borakalalo.

Once on the throne, Sebele II tried to reduce tensions by

reaffirming the right of his people to live and worship where they pleased. He, with a large majority of BaKwena, remained at Ntsweng. The Borakalalo leaders, however, were determined to regain control over the Kgosi and force him and his followers to resettle in the Valley. They refused to recognize the Kgosi's right to rule from the hill and lobbied for official support by questioning Sebele's ability to judge cases and otherwise govern without their advice. In May 1920, Resident Commissioner James MacGregor visited Molepolole and asked Sebele, in front of a large kgotla gathering, to relocate in Borakalalo. When Sebele refused point blank, MacGregor fumed that this "native chief" would dare to oppose him in public. MacGregor threatened to depose Sebele unless the Kgosi agreed to follow the Resident Commissioner's "advice".

Sebele had nothing to gain from a public showdown with the administration. After MacGregor departed for Mafikeng, Sebele sent his apologies and agreed to move. Sebele and his followers, however, remained in Ntsweng and made no effort to shift to the Valley. After several months, the British tried to coerce Sebele by withholding his ten per cent commission for hut tax collection, knowing he was under pressure to pay off mounting personal debts. Sebele responded by avoiding contact with the administration. When called to meetings, he absented himself with some excuse. He also stayed away from the annual sessions of the Native Advisory Council (NAC). The Borakalalo faction, however, did attend the NAC and used this body as a tool against the Kgosi.

In the 1921 session, the NAC chairman, MacGregor, tabled an anti-Sebele petition sent to him days before by the Borakalalo faction. The petition, which complained that Sebele listened only to the advice of commoners and not his royal uncles, came at the right time. This particular session was unusual in that it was attended by no single Kgosi. Two regents were present, but the majority were representatives drawn from royal groups of the various merafe, the same type of persons as the Borakalalo faction. The petition, which demanded that Sebele be put on trial, also gained support from some members of other merafe, who perhaps saw a chance to put the senior BaTswana Kgosi "in his place" (the BaKwena Kgosi is traditionally regarded as senior to the diKgosi of other merafe). In the end, MacGregor accepted the motion of Tshosa, regent of the BaNgwaketse, to form a new Tribal Council in Molepolole to act as the Resident Commissioner's "herdboys".

The administration welcomed the Council as a means of bringing Sebele under control. The councillors chosen were Kebohula and

Moiteelasilo, Sebele's uncles who had served on the first council in Sechele II's time, and Gaashugelwa Kgosidintsi. All were prominent foes of Sebele. When MacGregor confirmed the Council in kgotla in May 1921, he also gave Sebele a final warning to resettle in Borakalalo along with the other residents of Ntsweng.

Some months later, Sebele recruited an important ally, B.I. Vickerman, a prominent businessman in the area and influential member of the "European Advisory Council" (EAC). Vickerman (known as "Bigman") was sympathetic to Sebele's case and several of his fellow EAC councillors protested against the proposed forced removal of Ntsweng residents. They claimed the Protectorate had no authority to tell a Kgosi where to live, no business to interfere in Kwena politics by backing a "rebel faction" and no money to compensate both White and Black residents alike for the great expense in moving (Bigman's estimate: £21 000). MacGregor was also reminded that Sebele's father, Sechele II, had been authorized by the previous Resident Commissioner, to resettle in Ntsweng.

MacGregor had to back down. The High Commissioner in Cape Town sent instructions that any attempt to depose Sebele must have the backing of a "substantial majority" of the morafe. This MacGregor did not have. Sebele confidently remained in Ntsweng and built a new "Bakwena National Office" next to his kgotla. MacGregor's Tribal Council was a failure. Only two councillors took their work seriously. The Resident Magistrate called it a "broken reed". Sebele had won the battle. But others would have to be fought.

Sebele and bogwera

With the Borakalalo faction humiliated, Sebele was free to identify himself with bogwera. In 1901 the Christians had pressured Sebele's grandfather into abolishing the rites of inititation. In 1917, Sebele's father revived bogwera while Sebele was in Europe. Proper tradition dictates that a Kgosi must pass through initiation before the leopard skin can be placed over his shoulders. So, in 1922, Sebele put aside his duties in order to submit to the rigours of bogwera, the last thing that stood in the way of his becoming an effective ruler. After several months at Botlhapatlou, an absence which annoyed the British, Sebele's mophato was graduated as MaThubantwa. This name, also taken by Sebele's grandfather's regiment, was chosen in honour of the many World War I veterans who underwent bogwera with Sebele.

Conflict surrounded Sebele's bogwera and continued for years after. Missionaries and BaKwena Christians claimed Sebele had forced people to go to Botlhapatlou, and they punished those who went willingly by refusing them admission to school and church. They even excommunicated parents suspected of sending their sons. Overzealous supporters of bogwera were sometimes guilty of forcing others. And Sebele forced his own brothers, including Kgari. Because of the controversy, Kgari's mophato was graduated in 1924 as MaYakathata. For Sebele's Christian opponents, bogwera was not simply a religious issue. Many of them, already elderly, had not been initiated themselves. Bogwera was a threat to their prestige.

While bogwera continued, Sebele consolidated his authority. His financial problems, which at one point had led to threats of imprisonment, had been reduced. His public image was further enhanced by the return of a group of dissident BaKwena under Jacoba a Kgari, who had fled Kweneng during the time of Sebele I. With public backing, the Kgosi was also able to get the British to replace a troublesome Magistrate.

Changes in Molepolole

From his position of relative strength, Sebele took a number of steps to advance the welfare of his people. Sebele was an active promoter of municipal improvements. He imposed strict standards on the building of houses and fences and had streets kept clean and well maintained. Rubbish pits replaced garbage heaps. He told his people to bury their dead in the graveyard rather than in their lolwapa. New roads were built, and dam construction was attempted (though unsuccessfully). Sebele also sanctioned youth programmes in the form of Life Brigades for boys and girls. And while in power he welcomed the establishment of the Scottish-Livingstone Medical Hospital.

Sebele also wanted Molepolole to be a source of entertainment for the BaKwena. Sebele's reign was marked by many public events, some traditional and some not. And on such occasions, Sebele was apt to show off his skills as a pianist, singer and ballroom dancer. Sebele loved good times. He was impatient, however, with those whom he thought to be public nuisances. He was known to ride about on his horse at night in the manner of Isang Pilane, with riding crop in hand, ready to mete out instant punishment to hooligans.

Sebele was a complex and often contradictory person who was

capable of extreme behaviour. He could be both generous and greedy to the point of extravagance. At times he acted responsibly as a provider for his people. He looked after the destitute and others deserving support, and BaKwena willingly ploughed his masotla, knowing the grain would feed the needy. He established long periods for people to reclaim matimela cattle and used at least some of the beasts left over, or those collected as fines, for public purposes. The poor, particularly among his BaKgalagadi subjects, were also often exempted from paying Hut Tax, to the annoyance of the British. Yet, Sebele could be as harsh as he was considerate. Known as "Kgomoyatlhaba" on account of his bad temper, often made worse by alcohol, Sebele committed many acts of cruelty. More often than not, however, Sebele later apologized for his excesses. The Kgosi's womanizing was another cause of public concern. Even his friends worried at times when Sebele allowed personal pleasures to interfere with the performance of his public duties.

Sebele was faced with enemies more daunting than drink and women. Apart from his personal shortcomings, the Kgosi's eventual downfall was the result of his strained relations with the Government and with some of the white residents of Kweneng. Officials regarded Sebele as uncooperative, particularly with regard to the collection of Hut Tax. Their attitude was also influenced by local Whites. The white and Eurafrican ("coloured") blacksmiths in Molepolole, for example, protested in the EAC about Sebele's attempts to control their prices. Sebele, who was convinced the blacksmiths were overcharging, required them to buy wood for their furnaces from BaKwena and imposed on them a set of fees. Word of Sebele's actions reached the South African press, and one newspaper carried a critical story with the headline, "White Serfs of a Negro Chief".

Some local white and Asian retail traders also disliked Sebele. These men monopolized the market and convinced the Government that competition would destroy their businesses. When the Government supported them by denying licences and credit to BaTswana, Sebele and others protested at the NAC against the licensing system. He also tried to revoke one trader's labour-recruiting licence. Both these efforts failed, but in the Kweneng Sebele did manage to exercise some control by regulating cattle and grain sales, investigating cases of cheating, and getting the people to boycott goods of poor quality.

Sebele vs. the British

In 1925 and 1926 Sebele clashed with colonial officials. His opponents on these occasions were A.G. Stigand, Resident Magistrate in Molepolole, and Jules Ellenberger, the new Resident Commissioner. As in 1921, the Borakalalo figures, Kebohula and Moitseelasilo, took the lead. In 1925 they claimed that Sebele had beaten people outside the kgotla and complained about Sebele's reluctance in seduction cases to award fines to parents of impregnated daughters. Stigand held an inquiry in hopes of using the "elder headmen" to rouse the public into declaring themselves against Sebele. Instead, the Kgosi and headmen were criticized alike. Stigand's inquiry had achieved him nothing. Then, in the following year, when Sebele brutally assaulted his mistress, two dozen BaKwena drew up a petition against Sebele and handed it over to Stigand. The Resident Magistrate then used it to get Sebele charged in court. Ellenberger held a public inquiry in the hope that, this time, the BaKwena would support the removal of Sebele.

The inquiry failed to achieve its purpose. The BaKwena supported Sebele. Once again, the Borakalalo faction were exposed as an isolated minority. Only sixteen people voted for Sebele's abdication. Ellenberger was disappointed. He later wrote that. "We missed our chance by not removing Sebele from the Reserve".

In 1927 Sebele and Stigand engaged in a tug-of-war. When Stigand accidentally shot a local lunatic, Sebele demanded that Ellenberger remove the Resident Magistrate. The Kgosi also complained about Stigand's harassing the townspeople and plotting with his uncles. But Ellenberger kept Stigand in Molepolole. Stigand then wrote stinging reports about Sebele, portraying him as the puppet of "a cabal of Jewish businessmen" ("a dangerous power that controls the chief and a good proportion of the tribe"). Stigand also tried to revive the Tribal Council but this attempt fell apart when the BaKwena convicted Kebohula of using boloi against Sebele and sentenced him to exile. The Government then rescued Kebohula by proclaiming the Witchcraft Act and cancelling the judgement.

Sebele's relations with the Government became worse after he joined Tshekedi of the BaNgwato and Ntebogang of the BaNgwaketse. The three drew up a list of grievances and sent them direct to the High Commissioner over Ellenberger's head. British rejected these complaints, but they were worried about the unity among the diKgosi of the three largest merafe in the Protectorate.

The petitions of 1928

In 1928 Ellenberger's successor, Rowland Daniel, tried twice to imposed another Tribal Council on the BaKwena. In both instances he used a Borakalalo petition against Sebele as his excuse, and each time the outcome was the same. Only a small group supported the Council, whereas Sebele and a large majority of the commoners opposed it. Daniel's failure was a great triumph for Sebele's supporters, but it convinced the British that stronger measures against Sebele were necessary.

On 8 May 1928 a small group of proclaimed headmen filed a petition against Sebele. They called for the creation of a Tribal Council of four members (appointed by themselves), who would take over Sebele's political and financial powers. In order to act on this petition, Daniel held an inquiry six weeks later in Molepolole. Daniel summed up the results:

> During the course of the meeting it became evident that the petitioners were in the minority. They consisted of the Headmen related to the Chief's family, but they were only supported by a handful of the common men of the tribe ... whereas the opponents to the petition were represented by the Chief, a few headmen and about three-quarter of the common people.

In spite of widespread opposition voiced in the meeting to the revival of the BaKwena Tribal Council, Daniel insisted that a new Council be formed. Daniel was not interested in obeying the popular will. By forming a new council, he expected the BaKwena to understand what the British wanted and then accept it.

The 3rd BaKwena Tribal Council pleased no one. Even the British admitted it was a failure. The first and only real initiative taken by the four man Council with the support of the British was assuming control over all "tribal monies", which consisted of rents and fees collected by the morafe. Previously this income had been largely reserved for the Kgosi. The largest of the funds was an annual sum of £405 paid by the British South Africa Company for unused prospecting rights. (Before the Council assumed control, Sebele had already pocketed the BSACo cheque for 1928). The other fees and rents consisted of annual collections from local traders and blacksmiths. The councillors planned to use these fees to pay their own salaries. They discovered, however, that most of this "stand rent" money had been borrowed against. Soon the councillors were begging money from both the British and the

BaKwena. Within weeks, Stigand described the new Council as being like the old ones, "a broken reed".

When the 3rd Council collapsed, another petition reached Daniel. This time the petitioners wanted power to be placed in a Council of eight members. Daniel returned to Molepolole determined to revive the Council. As a prelude, he held another inquiry, in November 1929, in the main kgotla. Daniel again summed up the meeeting:

> I attended a full kgotla meeting at Molepolole on the 18th and 19th of November to discuss the matter and found there were at least two-thirds of the tribe who were opposed to the petition. The position was much the same as I found it a year ago, the greater number of headmen were in favour of the petition whilst the majority consisted of common people and a few headmen.

Daniel failed to recognize one significant difference between this inquiry and the last. Minutes of the kgotla meeting show that in contrast to previous gatherings, a number of self-proclaimed commoners spoke out on behalf of commoners in general. Most of this group denounced the need for any Council, though one speaker received some support for his suggestion that a Council be formed exclusively from commoners.

Once again, Daniel ignored the wishes of the BaKwena as a whole and reconstituted the Council. The four previous councillors were retained, with an additional member to be nominated by the Kgosi for a six-month trial period. Like the 3rd, the 4th BaKwena Tribal Council was a failure. In 1930, with overwhelming support, Sebele called for its abolition.

The deposition of Sebele

Charles Rey, who replaced Daniel in 1930, took office determined to get rid of the Kgosi. Even before Rey arrived in Mafikeng from overseas, Sebele was a marked man. The British were concerned about the lack of development in the Protectorate and the difficulties Daniel and others were having in their dealings with diKgosi. Rey's job was to "shake things up". Soon after Rey took up his post, he summoned the Resident Magistrate from Molepolole, A.G. Stigand, to serve as his personal assistant.

Rey was one of the most dynamic and controversial Resident Commissioners in the colonial period. During his term (1930-1937), he worked tirelessly, sometimes ruthlessly, to achieve his vision for

developing the Protectorate. Rey believed it was his job to clean up the "stagnation and decay" left by Daniel and others. His predecessors had been "too soft on chiefs" and allowed them too much power. Rey came with instructions to subordinate diKgosi to the Government in a full-scale system of "Indirect Rule". His mission led him into a struggle with the diKgosi, who feared that Rey intended to take away their powers and perhaps even place the Protectorate under South African rule. The removal of Sebele was the opening act in this dramatic confrontation.

Rey wanted Sebele out because of his anti-government influence on other diKgosi. Sebele's earlier alliance with Tshekedi and Nthebogang was a fresh memory. Rey also feared that new, young diKgosi such as Bathoen II and Molefi would fall under the sway of Sebele. For Rey to get rid of Sebele, however, he had to perform the difficult task of convincing London that the BaKwena approved.

Rey and Stigand, together with Stigand's replacement at Molepolole, Harold Neale, decided not to depend on help from Sebele's local opposition. Thinking back on Ellenberger's comments after the 1926 crisis ("we missed our chance ..."), they decided to remove Sebele and hoped the BaKwena would eventually accept his deposition. As Neale put it, "Natives are to a great extent fatalists". Events would prove them wrong.

As they plotted, Rey and his men chose Sebele's replacement: Kgari Sechele, Sebele's estranged brother and protege of Moiteelasilo. Kgari had been groomed by Stigand, who had secured him a government scholarship. Rey picked Kgari by ignoring his elder brother, Mosarwa, who would have been first in the line of succession. Conveniently, Mosarwa was then outside the country; Rey would later try to bribe him to stay away.

In early 1931, Rey seized on a minor incident to convince London that Sebele's behaviour was becoming a danger to BaKwena. A bogwera was held, and the usual complaints about boys being forced to attend reached Mafikeng. No proof supported these complaints, and evidence produced later showed that only one person had been accosted (he was able to escape). Nevertheless, Rey greatly exaggerated the bogwera disorder in his reports and gained permission to banish Sebele.

A trap was then laid. Sebele, in bed recovering from an illness, received a request from Rey to attend a diKgosi's meeting about water projects. When Sebele arrived in Mafikeng, Rey informed him that he had been "relieved of his functions" and would be sent directly to Ghanzi. Sebele tried to get help from his lawyer in Mafikeng, but time was short. Protectorate and South African police shadowed him around town. Before any legal action could be

taken on his behalf, he was put on board a train. Sebele never saw the Kweneng again. The train crossed the Northern Cape through Kuruman and Upington, north into Namibia to Windhoek, and east to Gobabis. There, word of Sebele's exile had arrived before him, and a large crowd of Africans cheered the BaKwena Kgosi as his train pulled into Gobabis station. Sebele was then trucked back inside the Protectorate to Ghanzi.

The aftermath

Back in Molepolole, the people were angry. Women threw stones at the police sent to gather Sebele's belongings. When Rey arrived to announce Sebele's banishment, he came with an armed escort. Rey called on the morafe to appoint someone in his place. Police silenced those who protested. Kebohula then nominated Kgari and it was accepted. Mosarwa was still away, but he was found in the Transvaal before Kgari was installed. It did not matter. The BaKwena still considered Sebele to be their Kgosi, but Rey's men found BaKwena willing to put the leopard skin on Kgari's shoulders.

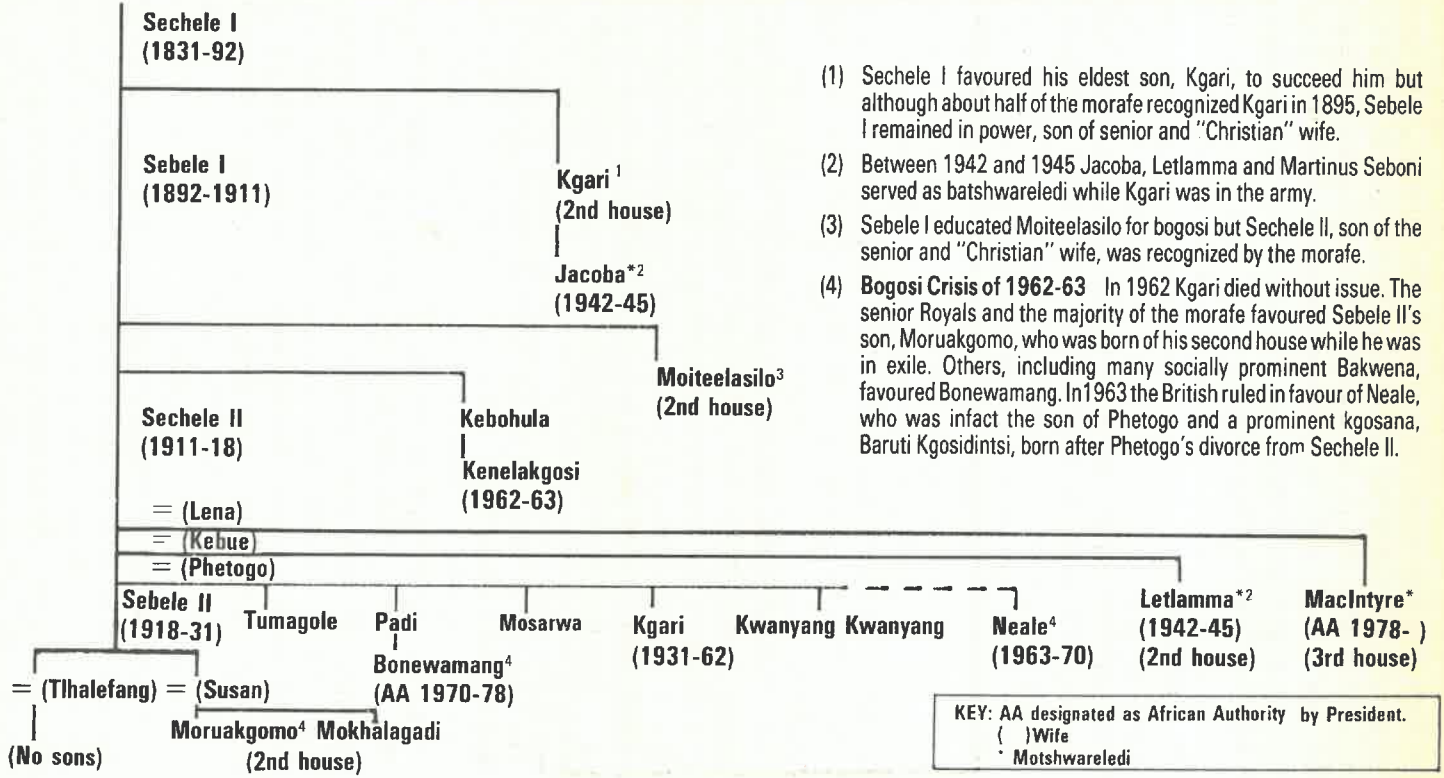
The BaKwena did not let matters drop. They were not the "fatalists" that Neale had described. Groups were formed by commoners in the Kweneng and among migrant workers in the Witwatersrand to draw up petitions and hire lawyers to get Sebele back. People resisted paying tax and attending meetings called by Kgari. The pro-Sebele group also had the sympathy of such diKgosi as Tshekedi and Bathoen.

In March 1933 they drew up the "Great Petition". It appealed that "British traditions of justice and fair play be observed". The petition denied the legality of Sebele's removal and Kgari's election and called for Sebele's return or proper trial. It contained 1,407 signatures representing nearly every BaKwena family. The old Borakalalo petitions never had more than twenty-five names.

The British responded with repression. Kgari got the backing to fine and threaten pro-Sebele ringleaders and lose them their jobs. Any form of opposition to Kgari was met with persecution. Members of the independent Church of God, a black-led pentecostal movement, were gaoled for long periods. Those who defied Kgari's ban on bogwera paid fines or went to goal. Kgari removed the pro-Sebele Kgosi of the BaLete at Gabane and began a cycle of strife that lasted for decades. In the Western Kweneng, BaKgalagadi were placed under Kgari's hated overseers.

In 1937 the British took the further step of destroying Ntsweng and Borakalalo. In 1933, they had used BaKwena money and labour

BAKWENA ROYAL GENEALOGY SHOWING SONS OF SECHELE II



(1) Sechele I favoured his eldest son, Kgari, to succeed him but although about half of the morafe recognized Kgari in 1895, Sebele I remained in power, son of senior and "Christian" wife.

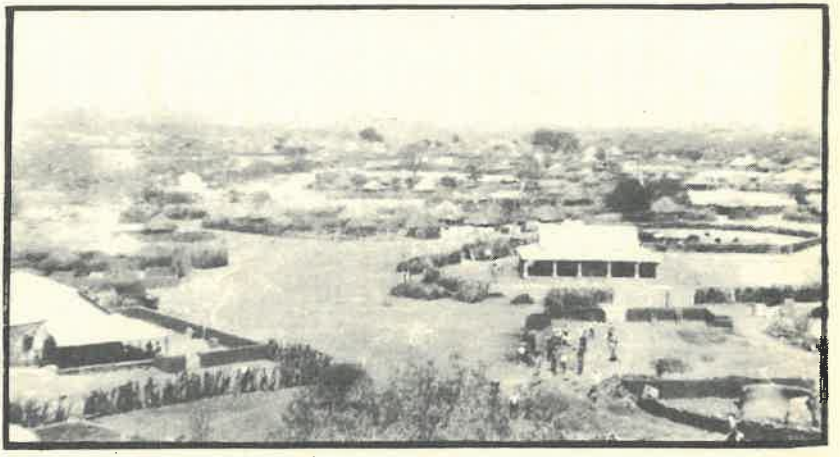
(2) Between 1942 and 1945 Jacoba, Letlamma and Martinus Seboni served as batshwareledi while Kgari was in the army.

(3) Sebele I educated Moiteelasilo for bogosi but Sechele II, son of the senior and "Christian" wife, was recognized by the morafe.

(4) **Bogosi Crisis of 1962-63** In 1962 Kgari died without issue. The senior Royals and the majority of the morafe favoured Sebele II's son, Moruakgomo, who was born of his second house while he was in exile. Others, including many socially prominent Bakwena, favoured Bonewamang. In1963 the British ruled in favour of Neale, who was infact the son of Phetogo and a prominent kgosana, Baruti Kgosidintsi, born after Phetogo's divorce from Sechele II.

KEY: AA designated as African Authority by President.
( )Wife
* Motshwareledi

to build Kgari's house at the present Kgosing in Molepolole. The British hoped the BaKwena would voluntarily shift their homes to be close to Kgosing, but for four years, Kgari's only neighbours were the tax collector and tribal police. After Rey was replaced by Charles Arden-Clarke in 1937, coercion was used. All the houses were knocked down, including the house of Sechele I. In April those who refused to move were fined heavily and, when unable to pay, put in gaol. As the gaols filled up, the BaKwena decided to move. Only Phetogo, the mother of Sebele and Kgari, refused to budge. She remained in Sebele's National Office, which ever since has been known to the BaKwena as "MmaKgosi". (It is the only building still standing at Ntsweng and stands next to the graves of the BaKwena diKgosi.)



Ntsweng (circa. 1928) showing BaKwena National Office (right) and Sechele's house (left)

The new Molepolole lacked some of the openness of Ntsweng. The colonial government opposed the mixing of races and were upset with free association of black and white at Ntsweng (and other BaTswana towns for that matter). Molepolole was racially segregated. Africans, Europeans, Asians, and Eurafricans had their own separate places to stay. (There was nothing to stop them, however, from socializing freely.) Only whites were compensated for the cost of moving. Many BaKwena have never forgiven either Kgari or the British for the destruction of Ntsweng and old Borakalalo.

Far away in Ghanzi, Sebele, too, remained defiant. He told the British he had not been banished because he still remained in his country. The local population showed Sebele great respect, which

upset the white farmers there. But Sebele was not allowed to return to the Kweneng. He became so lonely that, in 1938, he wrote a letter offering to abdicate if he could only be allowed to return home. The offer was refused. Sebele died in 1939. When his body was returned to Molepolole for burial, thousands gathered for the funeral. To them Sebele had died as their Kgosi. Some even maintain that bogosi jwa BaKwena was buried with Sebele.

There is a saying: "BaKwena ba ga se bolaya Kgosi" (Bakwena can kill a Kgosi). Bakwena traditions do mention two diKgosi who were executed by the people. But today, this saying is used to refer to the overthrow of Sebele by the British, not by themselves.

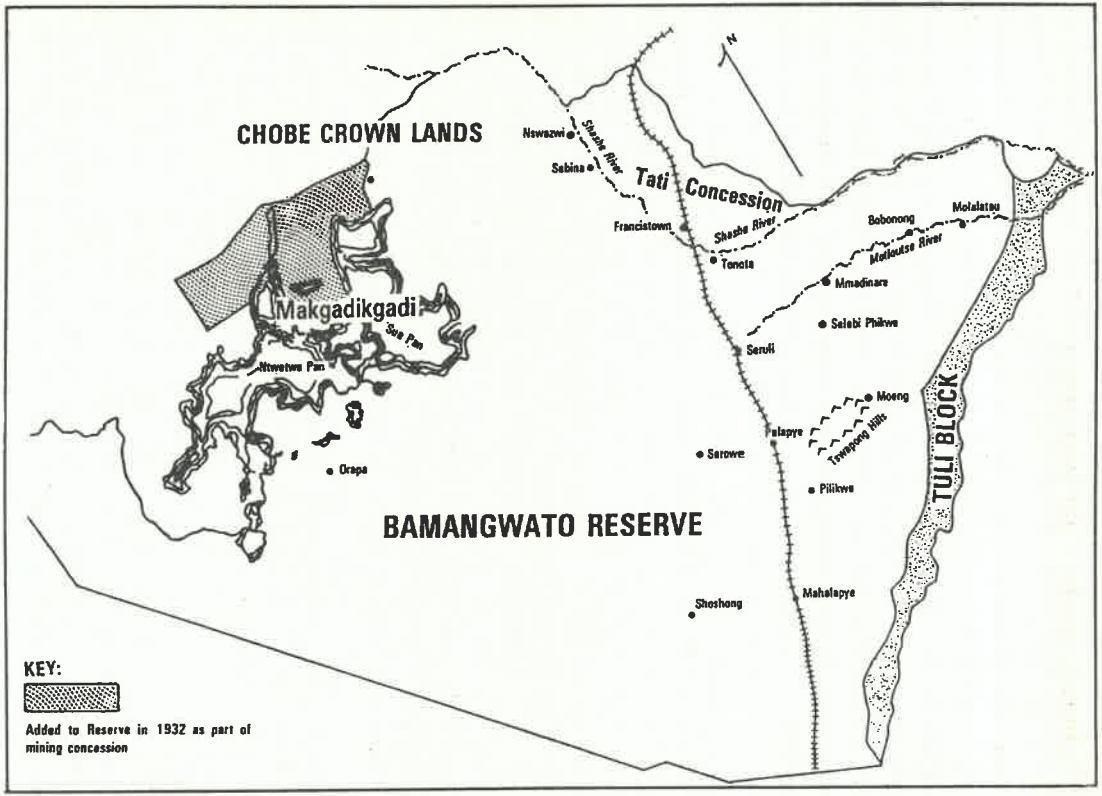
Chapter 3

The Statesman: Tshekedi Khama

In 1925, at the age of twenty, Tshekedi Khama became Regent of the BaNgwato for his four-year-old nephew, Seretse. From then until his death on 10 June 1959 he was the most influential figure in the history of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The British found him as troublesome as Sebele II, and at times they would have liked to replace him as ruler of the BaNgwato. But Tshekedi knew the British imperial system. Whenever the local administration threatened him, he appealed to their superiors in London. Early on he learned now to use the press in support of his cause. Tshekedi appreciated that the pen was mighter than the sword. He wrote a ceaseless stream of letters to important personalities in Britain, where they helped him plead his case against the colonial overlords. Above all, Tshekedi understood that the real seat of power in the British empire was Parliament in London. Through its members, whom Tshekedi skilfully cultivated, his point of view reached the Houses of Lords and Commons.

Tshekedi's success came through hard work, great determination and diligent study. His reserves of energy were almost inexhaustible. With a task before him, he was capable of working twenty hours a day until it was completed. He was a man who would not give up once he had begun something. Self- discipline and supreme effort were his working tools. Knowledge was his weapon. Tshekedi often won his battles with the British administration simply because he knew more than they did about the subject at hand. Being placed at a disadvantage through ignorance was to him a great sin, as an incident during his first year as Regent reveals. Immediately after a trial in which a Johannesburg lawyer had subjected him to a harrowing cross-examination, Tshekedi wrote to a book-seller in Cape Town and ordered three law books relating to the rules of evidence. In all subsequent legal cases — and there were many — Tshekedi entered prepared.

Tshekedi feared no man, however important he might be. He enjoyed a fight and left no stone unturned in quest of victory. BaNgwato and British opposed him at their peril. He took one High



Map 3 Bamangwato Reserve

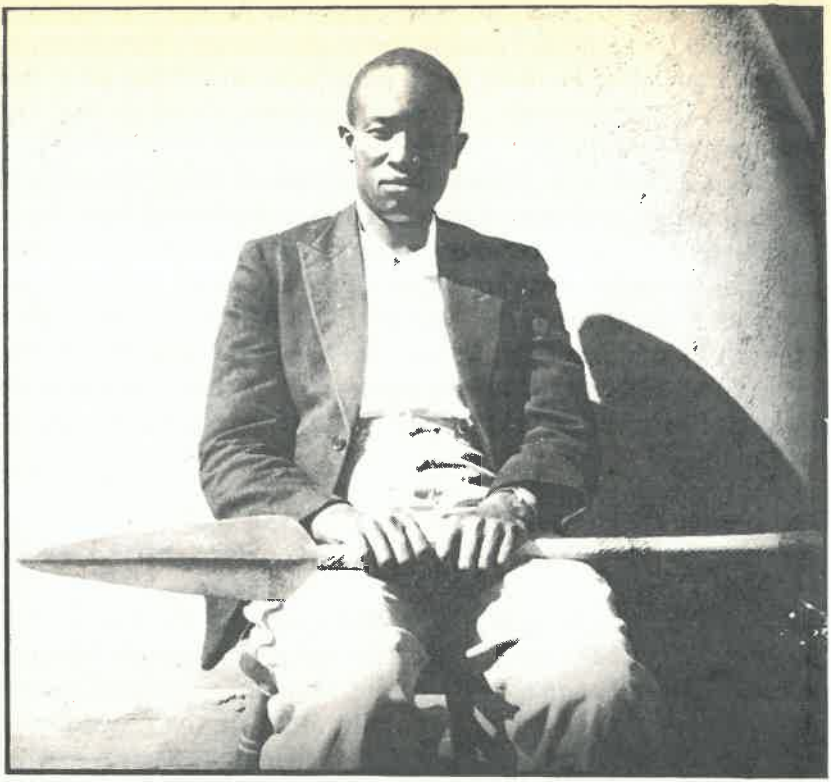
Commissioner to court and sent many of his BaNgwato opponents into exile. He could be ruthless and vindictive with his opponents. He also tended to be hasty in his judgements and reluctant to take advice. Like others with a powerful intellect, Tshekedi too often thought he knew best.

Whatever his faults, Tshekedi was a man of vision. Through his numerous contacts with educated people in the Protectorate, South Africa and Britain, Tshekedi understood issues in the broadest sense and championed causes that affected not only his morafe but peoples of the Protectorate and Southern Africa as whole. One of Tshekedi's abiding principles was that all people, regardless of race, were equal and entitled to education and prosperity. Tshekedi was prepared to be ruthless in the short run to achieve this noble result in the long.

Tshekedi's Botshwareledi

Tshekedi became Regent of the BaNgwato on the death of his brother, Sekgoma II, in October 1925. Sekgoma, born in 1869, was Khama III's eldest son by his first wife, Mma Besi. Tshekedi, born in 1905, was Khama's second and only other surviving son by his fourth wife, Semane. (After Mma Besi died in 1890, Khama married a second wife, who also died, then married and divorced a third wife before marrying Semane in 1900). Sekgoma II's son, Seretse, was his rightful successor to the bogosi. But he was only four years old when his father died. Though Tshekedi was the natural choice to become Motswareledi, he was only twenty years old and was untrained for the high responsibility of governing the largest morafe in the Protectorate. When Sekgoma died unexpectedly, Tshekedi was away at Fort Hare and about to take the matriculation examinations in hopes of reading for a university degree.

When Tshekedi returned to Serowe he found the royal family bitterly divided. Following Sekgoma's death, a minor riot erupted when Sekgoma's sister accused Semane of poisoning Sekgoma so that Tshekedi would come to power. Tshekedi quickly concluded that to rule the morafe effectively, he would have to take charge straightaway. He took over immediately from his one-eyed and much older cousin Gorewang, who had looked after GammaNgwato during Sekgoma's illness and after his death. The people recognized Tshekedi as Regent, and he presided over the kgotla thereafter, but the British did not recognize him until he was formally installed on 20 February 1926. Resident Commissioner

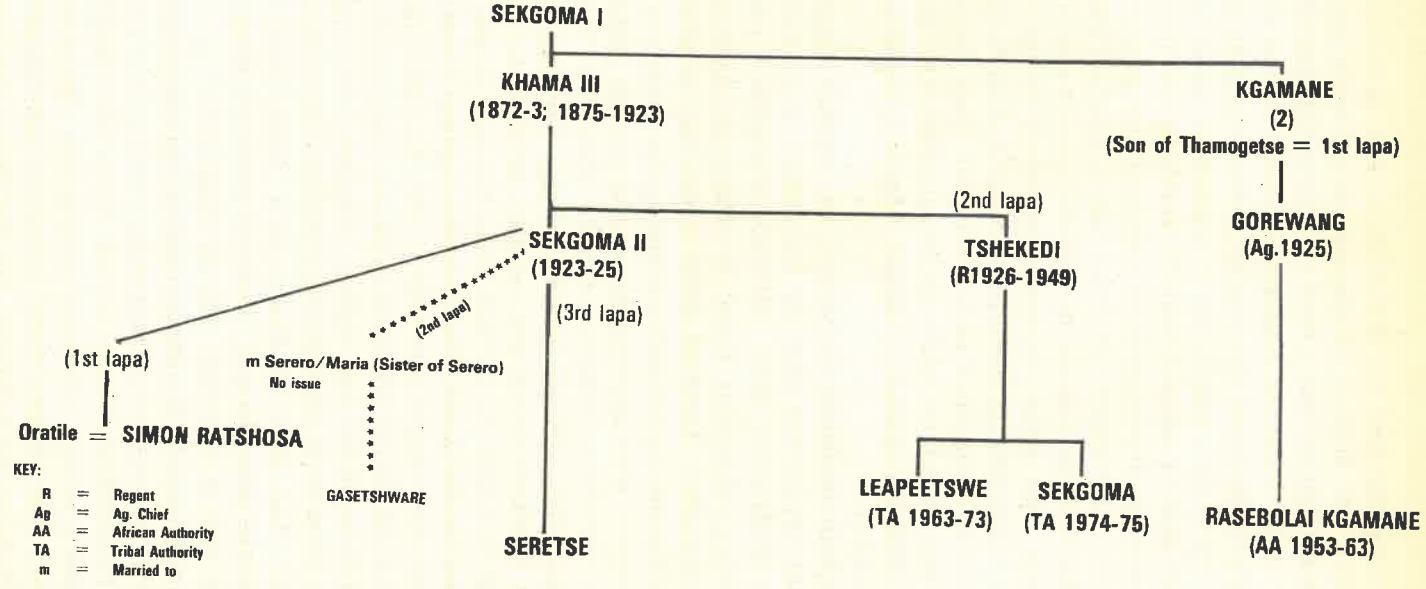


Kgosi Tshekedi

Jules Ellenberger declined to perform the actual installation himself, saying "By your own ancient custom you must install your own chief". Tshekedi's uncle, Moloi, then wrapped the leopard skin round the young man's shoulders. Afterwards, Tshekedi addressed the assembly saying he hoped to follow in his father's footsteps, that having the leopard skin placed on him was a great honour, but that all must remember it belonged to his nephew, Seretse.

Apart from Tshekedi, no one expected the young Regent to accomplish much. To older members of the royal family and British officials, this slightly-built young man of medium height looked like a mere, inexperienced boy. But Tshekedi quickly showed everyone he was determined to be master in GammaNgwato. Tshekedi, not the royalists or the British, would rule for his nephew, preserve bogosi and develop the country in the way that he saw fit. Many stood in the path of Tshekedi's objectives. In fact, soon after he returned to Serowe he came up against royals, members of the educated BaNgwato elite and the British.

TSHEKEDI'S GENEALOGY



**** = Issue not considered legitimate. Serero was barren and brought her sister, Maria, to stay with her. Maria gave birth to two sons for Sekgoma, but was never married to him. Nor was she brought by her family to "raise up seed" for the barren sister. She was therefore considered Sekgoma's concubine.

The Ratshosa affair

When Sekgoma died, the British persuaded the BaNgwato to set up a council for helping Gorewang, whom both the British and BaNgwato realized was a weak caretaker. One powerful group led by the three Ratshosa brothers (Johnnie, Simon and Obeditse), particularly favoured the council. Johnnie and Simon, who were appointed to the council, saw it as a way of preserving the power they had built up under Khama III and Sekgoma II and as a means of influencing the decisions of Tshekedi, just as they had those of Sekgoma. Ellenberger, too, felt it was in Tshekedi's best interest to keep the council, because he lacked experience in ruling. Phethu Mphoeng and other important members of the royal family, however, resented the Ratshosa's influence over Sekgoma and did not want it to continue under Tshekedi. They feared the council would become a mere tool in the hands of the three brothers. Thus, when Tshekedi arrived in Serowe, Mphoeng's group advised him to abolish it.

Tshekedi abolished the council, and trouble began. Ellenberger was not happy, nor were the Ratshosas. And when Tshekedi set about destroying their influence altogether, particularly by dismissing Johnnie as Tribal Secretary, the Ratshosas were even more disturbed. Tshekedi acted in this way in order to build up support in the royal family and among the batlhanka headmen and commoners, who opposed the council and the Ratshosas.

The Ratshosas bitterly resented their fall from power. In response, they refused to acknowledge Tshekedi as their ruler. When Tshekedi summoned the three brothers to the kgotla, they refused to come. So he had them brought in and sentenced to flogging for disrespect. They protested against Tshekedi's sentence. Johnnie was caught and beaten, but his two younger brothers escaped and shortly returned with guns. They tried to kill Tshekedi but only wounded him slightly. Tshekedi then ordered all their houses to be burnt, the customary punishment for those committing treason. The two Ratshosas took refuge with the Resident Magistrate, who charged, tried and convicted them for attempted murder (for these events, also see chapter 6).

From prison the Ratshosas made a legal claim against Tshekedi for their lost property. (Destroying a wrong-doer's property is not legal punishment under English law.) The Magistrate upheld Tshekedi's action, however, saying the Ratshosas had been punished in accordance with Tswana law and custom to which they, as BaNgwato, were subject. The Ratshosas then appealed to the

Special Court of the Protectorate, where they won their case. Tshekedi was ordered to pay them compensation for their destroyed property.

Tshekedi was furious at this judgement, because he felt it undermined his position as Regent. So, in turn, he appealed to the highest court of the British Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. Both Ellenberger and the High Commissioner in Pretoria, the Earl of Athlone, strongly advised Tshekedi to withdraw the case because of the expenses involved. Athlone felt Tshekedi would lose or, if not, that the Ratshosas could not afford to pay the costs. As it was, Tshekedi found money for the case by imposing a levy on his people. He also won the case. The Privy Council judged that Tshekedi had the right to inflict punishment on the Ratshosas in terms of traditional law, by which the BaNgwato were governed (the judges, however, disapproved of this aspect of BaNgwato law and suggested it be changed in future).

The Ratshosa affair reveals how young Tshekedi, from the beginning of his regency, was determined to brook no opposition from the BaNgwato or the British. It also shows that this "inexperienced boy" knew how to use the British legal system to attain his goals. When the Ratshosas were finally released from prison, Tshekedi persuaded the Government to banish them to Francistown, to which their closest supporters, their brother Johnnie and the sisters and daughter of Sekgoma II, had already been exiled. Tshekedi's triumph was complete.

The BaKhurutshe of Tonota

From the early years of his rule, Tshekedi experienced opposition from many quarters within the Bamangwato Reserve. The BaNgwato, or people of the Phuti, ruled over many such subordinate groups as the BaBirwa, BaTalaote, BaTswapong and BaKalanga. The BaBirwa of Malema resisted Khama III's rule, and the BaKalanga bakaNswazwi were involved for years in a struggle with Tshekedi. Short accounts of these conflicts appear in the next chapter. The case of the BaKhurutshe of Tonota provides another brief example.

The BaKhurutshe were relative newcomers in GammaNgwato. In 1913 Khama II permitted them to settle at Tonota because they were unhappy living under the Tati Company (see chapter 10). Some of the BaKhurutshe were Anglicans, and Khama made it a condition that they would not be allowed to practise their religion in his territory. Khama was the effective Head of the LMS Church, the

Peoples of Bamangwato Reserve, 1946

Group	Population
BaNgwato	20,159
BaKalanga	22,777
BaTswapong	11,237
BaBirwa	9,636
San	9,587
BaKhurutshe	5,441
BaKgalagadi	3,963
BaTalaote	3,538
BaKaa	3,055
BaPedi	2,572
BaPhaleng	2,409
OvaHerero	1,013
BaLozi	1,006
BaKwena	892
BaSeleka	889
BaNajwa	844
BaYei	724
Total	**99,742**

only church in GammaNgwato. Rauwe, Kgosi of the BaKhurutshe, accepted this condition.

Soon after he became Regent, Tshekedi was upset when he heard that some BaKhurutse had held an Anglican service. Tshekedi was adamant that only the LMS Church be in his territory and that the BaKhurutshe had violated one of Khama's conditions for living there. He also suspected the Anglicans were using religion as a cloak for political opposition. He believed the presence of more than one church in GammaNgwato would be divisive, just as it had been among the BaKhurutshe themselves, who were split between pro-LMS and pro-Anglican factions. Tshekedi therefore forced them to come to Serowe and live under his eye.

For the next seven years, Tshekedi had to deal with British complaints. The Earl of Athlone was shocked, because he believed in religious freedom, especially for Anglicans, who were members of the official religion of the British Crown. Despite pressure from the administration and the Anglican Church, Tshekedi stuck to his position.

The Mining Concession of 1929

Tshekedi's first major battle with the British began when they tried to force him into accepting a Mining Concession. Between 1929 and 1932 Tshekedi blocked British attempts to open up GammaNgwato to mining. The Protectorate was poor, and the Government hoped copper mining would bring in the revenue needed for its administration and development. The British also believed it better for men to work inside the territory than to go to South Africa. Feeding large numbers of workers in Protectorate mines would also help the local cattle industry, which had been hit hard by the weight restrictions.

Tshekedi was not opposed to mining in principle. He did fear, however, that if minerals were found in large quantities, cities like Johannesburg and Kimberley would spring up in GammaNgwato and that his people would be reduced to second-class citizens in their own country. Tshekedi had experienced life in South Africa and had visited mining hostels to see conditions there for himself. Tshekedi was determined that he would never be accused of handing over Seretse's country to the whites. At that stage in the territory's development, it would be better to improve agriculture and dairy farming. For Tshekedi, the only terms possible were that he, on behalf of the BaNgwato, be responsible for controlling white mineowners and especially white miners who came to settle in his country. Thus, in January 1929, when he was handed the revised version of the Mining Concession his father had made with the British South Africa Company in 1893, Tshekedi objected strongly.

When the British tried to overrule him, Tshekedi put on his battle gear. He stood up to the Earl of Athlone, brother of Queen Mary, and went to London to face Lord Passfield, Dominions Secretary. And when they failed to respond to his protests, Tshekedi took his case to the British public. With the aid of the LMS and the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, he contacted Members of Parliament and the press and drew attention to the dangers mining could present to his people. After returning to the Protectorate, Tshekedi kept his campaign in Britain alive by writing hundreds of letters.

Tshekedi gained only a partial victory. In 1932 he had to sign a second revised agreement, but it was a vast improvement over the first. The BaNgwato would be paid a higher rent and receive a royalty on all minerals exploited; they would be compensated in land for any area used in mining operations; mine siting would be strictly regulated; and Tshekedi, as Kgosi, would have control over the importation of non-BaNgwato labour. In the end, the ore found

was not worth mining and the British South Africa Company cancelled the concession in 1934, the mineral rights at that point reverted to the BaNgwato.

Twenty-five years later Tshekedi was to put to use the considerable knowledge he had gained about mining during his earlier struggle. Tshekedi realized that mining would someday have to come. And when that happened, Tshekedi felt the company concerned should be British rather than South African. In 1959, when the BaNgwato finally made an agreement under which the copper at Selebi Phikwe was mined, they did so with the London-based Roan Selection Trust. This agreement, which so favoured the BaNgwato, was largely the result of Tshekedi's skills and experience. It was signed a few days before his death.

Charles Rey and the "Native Proclamations"

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Rey, Resident Commissioner for the Bechuanaland Protectorate from 1930 to 1937, was a determined authoritarian who became involved in a series of disputes with Tshekedi and other diKgosi, including Sebele II (see Chapter 2). He had been appointed by Leopold Amery, Dominions Secretary, who had visited the Protectorate and was shocked by its backward state. He saw in Rey a man who could develop the territory and improve its administration. When Rey arrived to take up his post, he also was struck by conditions in the Protectorate. It was utterly undeveloped. He also formed a negative opinion about diKgosi. He regarded them as little dictators who did more or less what they liked. Rey decided, therefore, to initiate a major programme of economic development and to reform the system of administration used by diKgosi, particularly the way justice was carried out.

Rey's new administrative plan was contained in two draft proclamations (laws). The first concerned "Native administration", the second, "Native justice". The proclamations were long, complicated documents that went into great detail about a new system of government to be introduced into the Reserves. One of the reasons given for the proclamations was that Britain wished to introduce a system of local administration of Africans, known as "Indirect Rule", that had been developed in Nigeria and Tanganyika (Tanzania) and was being applied to other British colonies in Africa. The idea behind Indirect Rule was that the British could use traditional institutions to carry out effective colonial administration at the local level.

When Rey presented his proclamations to the diKgosi in 1932,

there was an uproar. Tshekedi in particular realized that instead of using traditional institutions, the proclamations aimed at destroying them. Not only would Rey's draft laws threaten the powers of the diKgosi, they would undermine the kgotla as the focus of all decision-making in the morafe. Tshekedi considered that Rey's proclamations bore little resemblance to the system of Indirect Rule practised in the rest of British Africa. They certainly did not follow the model developed by Lord Lugard and then modified by Sir Donald Cameron in Tanganyika. They closely resembled instead the "Native Administration" proclamations introduced by the Hertzog Government in 1927 in South Africa. Hertzog had made African diKgosi in the Union mere bureaucrats completely dependent for their position on the white South African administration. To Tshekedi and the diKgosi, it looked as though Rey was trying to do the same.

Tshekedi quickly took the leading role in the diKgosi's battle with Rey. Since 1927, Tshekedi had worked with other diKgosi in challenging colonial authorities. In 1927 he and Sebele II and Ntebogang had combined to protest against the Marriage and Witchcraft Proclamations. He had tried to associate fellow diKgosi in his campaign against mining. Thus, when Tshekedi launched his attack on the proclamations and in particular the way they had been introduced without any prior consultation, the diKgosi readily accepted his leadership. They respected the quickness with which Tshekedi pinpointed the threat posed by the proclamations and admired his oratorical skills. Most of all they liked the way this young man stood up to the aggressive Resident Commissioner.

Tshekedi engaged himself in a long and complex battle against many provisions contained in the proclamations. Above all he was disturbed by their similarity to recent South African laws. Tshekedi feared Rey was planning to bring local administration in the Protectorate into line with that in South Africa as a prelude to incorporation. If ever the British handed the Protectorate over to South Africa, Tshekedi wanted to be sure that diKgosi would go into the Union with a system of administration that respected bogosi and SeTswana law and custom.

Another point demonstrated by Tshekedi was that the proclamations violated British principles of Indirect Rule. Tshekedi had read the two major works on this policy, written by Frederick Lugard and Donald Cameron, and he prepared a document comparing Rey's proclamations with the Lugard-Cameron model and the South African proclamations. Tshekedi proved that Rey's were much closer to the South African model than to that of Lugard

and Cameron, which was already in force or was currently being introduced throughout the rest of British Africa. Tshekedi argued that only proclamations based on the Lugard-Cameron model would protect traditional institutions in Bechuanaland.

To underscore his point, Tshekedi illustrated how Rey's proclamations would leave diKgosi undefended. Tshekedi objected to the provision whereby the diKgosi had to be recognized by the British who could suspend or depose them without trial. In traditional law, he argued, diKgosi are born not appointed. Likewise they could only be deposed by the people, who in precolonial times might kill them or drive them into exile. Tshekedi admitted the time was past for using such methods, but the people were still entitled to a formal judicial inquiry to determine whether the people or the Government wanted to get rid of a particular Kgosi. The recent banishment of Sebele II was clearly in the forefront of Tshekedi's mind.

Tshekedi also objected to the creation of formal councils and tribunals to assist diKgosi. No such bodies existed in traditional SeTswana society. In kgotla every adult male had the right to advise the Kgosi. A Kgosi might consult smaller groups, but these varied in composition depending on the issue at hand. Rey wanted to create tribunals with fixed membership for the morafe's kgotla and each ward's kgotla, but Tshekedi pointed out this would undermine the very basis of SeTswana law and custom, which provided that a person was to be tried by all adult males present in the kgotla at a particular time.

Tshekedi reminded Rey that long ago, in 1895, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, had told Tshekedi's father when visiting England, that diKgosi would continue to rule their people very much as they had before. He also noted that Cameron's works on administration insisted that the system introduced for each group should follow as closely as possible the system used traditionally by the people themselves. Thus Rey's proclamations violated Chamberlain's agreement with Khama; they also violated British practice in the rest of the British African empire.

For eighteen months, Tshekedi campaigned tirelessly against the proclamations and gained support in a variety of ways. Throughout this period, different diKgosi were at his side. In London Tshekedi had allies who raised questions in Parliament and sent delegations to the Dominions Office. Attacks on the proclamations appeared in the British press. Meanwhile at home, Tshekedi spoke out against them in the NAC, in kgotla and in interviews with Rey

and the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Stanley. He proved such a thorn in the flesh of the Administration that Rey would have done anything to get rid of him. When in 1933 Rey learnt that Tshekedi had sentenced a white man to be flogged in his kgotla, it seemed his opportunity had come.

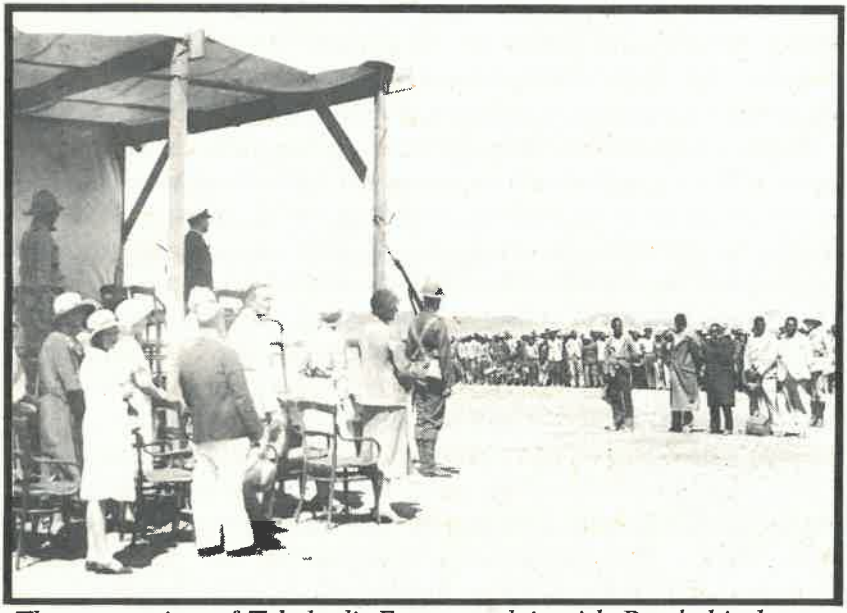
The McIntosh incident

In Serowe during the early years of Tshekedi's regency a number of instances of Europeans seducing BaNgwato girls were brought to his attention. From 1927 through the early months of 1933 Tshekedi made repeated complaints to the Resident Magistrate about the activities of these white men. Nothing was done, however. In August 1933 a young white man called McIntosh, who had been the subject of a number of Tshekedi's complaints, struck a MoNgwato youth during a quarrel over a young girl with whom McIntosh was at the time living. Despairing of getting the Magistrate to control McIntosh and others like him in GammaNgwato, Tshekedi decided to take action himself. He summoned McIntosh to appear in his kgotla. After hearing evidence from McIntosh, the young man he struck as well as a number of witnesses, Tshekedi sentenced McIntoch to a flogging. In so doing he had the support of the BaNgwato and most of the white residents of Serowe.

Rey quickly seized this opportunity to have Tshekedi removed from office. In the British empire one of the rules was that "native 'authorities" had legal jurisdiction over their own people, but not over whites. Rey immediately telegraphed the Acting High Commissioner, Admiral Evans, then in charge of the British fleet at Simonstown. Evans reacted like the military man he was: supported in his action by Colonel Rey he sent armed marines to deal with Tshekedi on the grounds that the danger of a "native rebellion" had arisen. No such danger existed, but since the recent near-rebellion at Mosopa, British officials had been extremely nervous (see Chapter 4). For Rey it now seemed that the occasion had at last arrived for deposing or suspending Tshekedi from office. The way would then be clear for the promulgation of the proclamations.

Soon after Evans and his troops arrived, Tshekedi was suspended. First, a Court of Inquiry was held at the British camp at Palapye Road, but it was not interested in hearing Tshekedi's side. Many BaNgwato had come in support of their Kgosi (Tshekedi made sure they were unarmed), and Tshekedi's lawyer, Douglas Buchanan of Cape Town, was there to defend him. Even McIntosh appeared, to say he had no complaint against Tshekedi and admitted he had been involved in several cases in kgotla trials already. The

day after the inquiry, Admiral Evans suspended Tshekedi in an impressive ceremony on the Serowe race course. Speaking from a special dais erected for the occasion. Evans spoke while the guns of the British navy stood ready. He condemned Tshekedi and told the assembled BaNgwato and European communities of Serowe that Tshekedi was unfit to be their ruler. Police then escorted Tshekedi to his car. Before he was driven off into exile, the Serowe whites came to shake his hand and say how sorry they were about what had happened.



The suspension of Tshekedi: Evans on dais with Rey behind, Tshekedi centre of BaNgwato group

Once in exile, Tshekedi flew into action. He contacted his supporters in Britain, and criticism of Evans and Rey's administration appeared in the press. Later in the House of Commons, it was even suggested that Evans should be charged personally for the costs of the expedition to Serowe. The Dominions Secretary and his officials, as well as High Commissioner Herbert Stanley then on leave in London, felt that Evans and Rey had overreacted. Even in South Africa, where the idea of a black man striking a white and getting away with it was unheard of, the press attacked the two. For many South Africans, McIntosh's "crime" of sleeping with blacks was worse than Tshekedi's "crime" of having McIntosh flogged.

Meanwhile, in the Protectorate, the BaNgwato resisted Rey's attempts to replace Tshekedi. When he asked that they appoint

someone to act, the BaNgwato responded by saying that only Tshekedi could do that. Rey discovered he had no one to turn to. Tshekedi's opponents within the royal family and educated elite rallied round him in his hour of need. Even Simon Ratshosa wrote Tshekedi a note of sympathy. Rey was left unable to operate indirect rule in GammaNgwato because no MoNgwato would act in Tshekedi's place.

Then Tshekedi took a clever step. Never, he declared, had he assumed it was right as Kgosi to bring white residents in Gamma-Ngwato to the kgotla for justice. Evans and Rey used Tshekedi's statement to escape from their dilemma. They announced he had "apologized" for ordering McIntosh's flogging. Within weeks of deposing Tshekedi, Evans returned to Serowe to reinstate him.

Tshekedi emerged as the real victor. He had focussed attention of the British and South African press on the Protectorate. He had mobilized support among British people concerned with colonial affairs. When Parliament resumed after its recess, fierce criticism of the Protectorate administration was made in debates. The white community in Serowe, too, had backed Tshekedi. And much more satisfying to Tshekedi was the unified support he received from the BaNgwato, who previously had been divided.

The Proclamations fight resumed

After his reinstatement, Tshekedi continued his struggle against Rey's Proclamations. In the 1934 redraft, he gained some concessions, but Rey held on to those features which most upset Tshekedi. And, on 15 January 1935, the "Native Proclamations of 1934" became law. Tshekedi responded by refusing to apply them in Bamangwato Reserve. He sent a petition to King George V, but the King did not accept it. Tshekedi then resorted to delaying tactics. When Rey wanted him, Tshekedi put himself out of reach at the cattle post or in hospital. When threatened with removal for not complying with the law by forming a Council, Tshekedi sent the Resident Magistrate a list of councillors some of whom had not the slightest claim to be a close advisor. Tshekedi complied, in other words, by making a mockery of the system. Once again, Rey was laying plans to have Tshekedi deposed.

Tshekedi then played his final card. He and Bathoen II sued the High Commissioner to Court for imposing proclamations on the BaNgwato and BaNgwaketse that violated the 1895 "treaty" whereby the British agreed to respect traditional law and custom. Tshekedi and Bathoen's law suit delayed the implementation of the

Proclamations for another six months. Finally, in July 1936, the trial was held with a South African judge presiding.

Tshekedi and Bathoen lost the case. The judge agreed with the two diKgosi that the Proclamations ran counter to law and custom. But that was not the essential point. Under the provisions of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890, the judge found that the Crown had "unfettered and unlimited powers to legislate for the government of ..... the native tribes in the Bechuanaland Protectorate". In other words, the British administration could do what it liked. As Rey put it, "My Proclamations stand". Tshekedi and Bathoen did not lose entirely. The days the Administration had taken to argue that the Proclamations were compatible with African law and custom were deducted from the costs awarded against the two diKgosi.

Tshekedi and Bathoen lost this battle, but they were not finished fighting the war. In 1937 Rey left the Protectorate without succeeding in forcing Tshekedi to implement the Proclamations. And Rey's replacement, Charles Arden-Clarke, abandoned Rey's proclamations and set out to draft a new set in consultation with Tshekedi and other diKgosi. In contrast to Rey, who adopted a head-on approach with diKgosi, Arden-Clarke took the roundabout way. Also, he had spent his earlier career in Nigeria and was much more sympathetic to Tshekedi's views on Indirect Rule.

Tshekedi was not anti-British. In spite of his quarrels with Rey and previous Resident Commissioners, Tshekedi was willing to cooperate with an RC who was prepared to discuss policy with him, rather than impose it. While Arden-Clarke was in office, Tshekedi cooperated closely with the British in their war effort and raised 5,000 men for the AAPC from the Bamangwato Reserve (see chapter 7). And in 1943, when Arden-Clarke's new proclamations were promulgated, Tshekedi openly approved:

> This may not be the proper place for doing it, but I wish to express my gratitude for the Proclamations recently promulgated. I still dislike the Proclamations promulgated in 1934, but in the case of these new Proclamations, even if others oppose them I will fight those people tooth and nail in the same manner in which I fought Government regarding the Proclamations of 1934.

Tshekedi and incorporation

The prospect of incorporation seemed most real in the mid-1930s, when the South African government offered to finance development in the Protectorate. The British Government, still

suffering from the effects of the 1930s depression, welcomed this offer, because they lacked the money to spend on Bechuanaland and the two other High Commission Territories (Basutoland and Swaziland). Tshekedi and the other diKgosi rejected South Africa's help outright. They regarded the offer as an attempt to sweeten them into accepting incorporation. Tshekedi arranged for an unofficial Commission of Inquiry to assess the true nature of Batswana attitudes towards incorporation, and the Commission reported that the vast majority of BaTswana were opposed.

Throughout his entire public life, Tshekedi worked to ensure that Britain would not hand over his country to South Africa. Both his father and brother had feared incorporation, and Tshekedi continued this tradition. Tshekedi came to power when South African Prime Minister J.B.M. Hertzog was leading the campaign to deprive blacks of their rights and demanding that the High Commission Territories be transferred from Britain to the Union. Thereafter, Tshekedi remained constantly aware of the South African threat. He saw the mining agreement, the 1934 Proclamations and other measures as the same wolf in different sheep's clothing. In order to defend the Protectorate from incorporation, he wrote countless letters and gained sympathy in Britain by writing an article "What the Protectorates Most Fear" and a pamphlet *(A Memorandum to the British Parliament and People)*, which received wide publicity. Tshekedi's work in this regard continued through the 1940s and ended only with his death in 1959.

In his struggle against incorporation, Tshekedi emerges most clearly as a spokesman for Africans throughout the region, as distinct from the Kgosi of BaNgwato. Incorporation threatened the people of the Protectorate and those of other colonies, not just the residents of Bamangwato Reserve. Tshekedi fought against it by working closely with other diKgosi who shared his fears. He fought it by seeking allies in other parts of Africa, in Britain and elsewhere, where the regional and global threat of white supremacy had been recognized. And he fought not only for his own people, but for the rights of Africans over whom he had no appointed responsibility.

Tshekedi and South West Africa

In 1947 when Tshekedi learnt that South Africa planned to make South West Africa a fifth province of the Union (since 1920 South Africa had administered South West Africa as a League of Nations mandated territory), he telegraphed the British Government to forward his protest to the United Nations in New York. The British

refused to pass it on. This was a matter, they answered, that did not concern Tshekedi. Tshekedi was frightened that if South Africa's plan went ahead, it would not be long before they took over the High Commission Territories, too.

Tshekedi believed that the future of the Protectorate and South West Africa were intertwined. The two territories shared a long common border, and Tshekedi had hopes that a railway from Palapye across the Kgalagadi to Walvis Bay would one day be built. If South Africa took over South West Africa, the people of the Protectorate would lose access to a valuable port on the Atlantic ocean and remain totally dependent on the Union. The Protectorate, too, had a responsibility for the welfare of the many refugees from South West Africa who had fled German and South African rule. Tshekedi had a large community of OvaHerero living in the Reserve at Mahalapye (see also chapter 8).

In launching his campaign, Tshekedi first built support within the Protectorate. Together with all the other diKgosi, except Molefi of the BaKgatla and Letlamoreng of the BaRolong, Tshekedi drew up a petition to the United Nations. (Letlamoreng could not sign the petition because most of his people lived in South Africa and he was a subject of South Africa. Molefi's reasons are not yet known). Thereafter Tshekedi conducted his campaign as the chosen representative of the "Chiefs and People of the Bechuanaland Protectorate". He thus led what may be described as the first national political movement in twentieth-century Botswana. In the following months, Tshekedi used all his knowledge of the British political system to advance his case against South Africa. The British, however, would not budge.

The British feared helping Tshekedi because doing so might anger South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, a staunch British ally during World War II. Smuts was Britain's last hope of preventing the Afrikaner-dominated National Party from coming to power. And Smuts, who was holding onto power for dear life, wanted South West Africa in the Union in order to preserve his party. Britain was determined to support Smuts at the United Nations. To safeguard this plan, Britain prevented Tshekedi and his lawyer, Douglas Buchanan, from leaving South Africa in order to see the Dominions Secretary in London and to lobby delegates at the United Nations in New York. Tshekedi was so upset with the British Government that he turned down an honour to be presented to him by King George VI.

Tshekedi responded to British obstruction with his accustomed vigour and talent. He used his contacts in the British and South

African press to publicize his campaign; he got British Members of Parliament to question ministers in the Lords and the Commons. He also contacted the Indian High Commissioner in South Africa and asked that the Indian delegation at the UN present to the UN General Assembly the case of the "Bechaunaland Chiefs and Peoples".

As it was, on 14 December 1946 the United Nations rejected Smuts's application to absorb South West Africa. Smuts was attacked by many countries, most particularly India, which was upset by recent discriminatory legislation enacted against Indians living in Natal and the Transvaal. When the vote came, even the British delegation abstained. The British had become increasingly embarrassed by the hostile attacks in the UN as well as its own Parliament on South Africa's "native policy", to which many of Tshekedi's friends in the governing Labour Party were opposed.

There is no doubt that Tshekedi was a major factor in Smuts's failure to gain UN approval for the takeover of South West Africa. Smuts's defeat made it more difficult for South Africa to consider the takeover of the High Commission Territories. Tshekedi had demonstrated that an African who knew how to manipulate the British press, Parliament and public opinion could achieve wonders. He was also among the first Africans to appreciate how the new United Nations could serve as a forum of protest by the oppressed colonial peoples of the world. Even Smuts, who had never before been challenged in this way by a "native", admitted privately that Tshekedi was the greatest African he had ever met.

In other chapters of this book Tshekedi often appears in a less favourable light. In contrast to the shining and well-publicized example he set in the battles outlined above, there was an unpleasant and dimly-lit side to this man, who ruled from Serowe for over two decades. His reputation, in fact, was often greater outside the Protectorate than it was within. In reaching any conclusion about Tshekedi, however, his great achievements cannot be ignored, and the severe manner in which he ruled his people will have to be weighed against the efforts he made on behalf of his own and later African generations.

SECTION II

Other voices

Between 1929 and the end of World War II, diKgosi began to lose ground both as spokesmen for the people and as opponents of the Protectorate Government. Decline of their influence was brought about by the administration, which deliberately curtailed their authority while increasing the rewards for collaboration, and by their own inability to offset a series of new hardships occasioned by economic depression, drought, rapidly increasing labour migration and conscription into World War II. During this "Time of Troubles", as the leadership vacuum grew, incidents of popular unrest became more frequent. For the first time, the voices of men with no traditional audience also became audible. None of these new voices received more than brief attention. But their words, and the deeds of the discontented, were regarded by diKgosi and Protectorate officials as serious threats to themselves.

Chapter 4

Resistance from Subordinate Groups: BaBirwa of Malema, BaKgatla Mmanaana and BaKalanga Nswazwi

While many diKgosi struggled to preserve their position against the Government, some worked just as hard to control their "subject communities". Bathoen and Tshekedi, for example, who led the fight against the Proclamations of 1934, accepted help from the British in suppressing subordinate groups who tried to express real grievances.

In pre-colonial times, diKgosi lacked absolute control. The

kgotla system checked their power, and an opposition group could try to unseat the Kgosi. It could also simplify matters by moving away for the purpose of setting up its own morafe or joining another. In the nineteenth century, many such groups moved about in the area now called Botswana, and all merafe were made up of groups of different origin. Because of widespread insecurity caused by the mfecane and Boer expansions, however, most people in this area gained refuge by giving allegiance to one of five BaTswana diKgosi. These were the diKgosi of BaKwena (bagaKgabo), Ba-Ngwato, BaNgwaketse, BaKgatla (bagaKgafela) and of BaTawana. Nevertheless, many of the groups under these diKgosi tse dikgolo regarded this arrangement as temporary. Each retained their own leader and thought of themselves as more-or-less independent.

British rule changed this relationship. The colonial Government recognized these diKgosi tse dikgolo, along with the lesser diKgosi of the BaLete, BaTlokwa and BaRolong, and made them the respective owners of eight "Native Reserves". The Reserves made up about half of the Protectorate's territory, the rest taken as the property of either the British Government ("crown lands") or foreign companies and individuals ("freehold areas"). By 1899 the Government had either established or sanctioned boundaries enclosing each of the Reserves. These steps worked to the disadvantage of subordinate groups in two important ways. Reserve boundaries prevented them from breaking free of diKgosi tse dikgolo, and in each Reserve the authority of the Kgosi e kgolo was regarded by the Government as absolute.

Secure in the knowledge that the British would support them, many ruling diKgosi became increasingly indifferent to the interests of their subject communities. During the colonial period, tension between these people and their diKgosi lay just beneath the surface, and on occasion open resistance occurred. What follows are three examples of conflict: that between the BaBirwa of Malema and the BaKalanga bakaNswazwi against Khama III and Tshekedi of the BaNgwato, and the BaKgatla bagaMmanaana against Bathoen II of the BaNgwaketse. Other examples exist, but these three show how resistance could lead to a serious crisis and challenge not only diKgosi, but the colonial Government.

The BaBirwa of Malema

In the early 1920s a small group of BaBirwa under Kgosi Malema tried in vain to defy the authority of Khama III. Khama's mephato crushed this resistance and scattered Malema's people. Meanwhile,

Malema hired a Johannesburg lawyer to champion their cause. At the time, such a step was unheard of. The British were taken by surprise, but they quickly found ways of preventing Malema's case from reaching court. The BaBirwa incident demonstrates how, from early colonial days, Government and diKgosi worked together on matters affecting subordinate groups and denied them the right to take judicial action in imperial courts. It later proved to be an important precedent.

When the crisis began, Malema's people were living in the northern Tuli Block. In 1895 Khama III had given the Tuli Block land to the British who in turn handed it over to the British South Africa Company (BSACo). After 1904 the Company began to sell the land to white farmers. The BaBirwa then living within the area had no say about the transfer of their land. In 1911, the BaBirwa were told that they could settle in the Tuli Block, but only as rent-paying tenants of the Company or as labourers on Company-owned farms. Some BaBirwa left, but Malema's group remained. They claimed they were the original inhabitants, not "migrants" as the BSACo called them. In late 1920, Khama was asked by Government (on behalf of the BSACo) to evict "his people" from the Tuli farms. The MoNgwato, who had a reputation for asserting his authority and demonstrating loyalty to Britain, agreed. In December Khama dispatched a mophato under Modisaotsile, overseer at Bobonong, to do the job.

Modisaotsile was instructed to remove Malema's people to Bobonong. Khama had recently established this village in order to concentrate all the BaBirwa of the area into one settlement, where they could be controlled. Malema's were the only BaBirwa who had managed to avoid resettlement. The Government's request, therefore, gave Khama the chance he wanted. Upon arriving at Malema's, Modisaotsile ordered the BaBirwa to abandon their homes and proceed to Bobonong immediately. When Malema asked for time to await the harvest (seeds had already been planted), his request was rejected and the mophato approached Malema's village. In fright, many BaBirwa, including Malema, fled across the nearby South African and Southern Rhodesian borders and found refuge with BaBirwa living on the other side.

The Tuli was emptied of BaBirwa. Those who did not flee were forcibly removed to Bobonong. Their houses were burnt, and many BaBirwa complained about mistreatment. Malema later claimed that a large sum of money had been stolen from his house. And when he and some of his followers returned for the harvest, an armed mophato arrived to arrest them. Malema was flogged, then

managed to escape back to South Africa. The mophato took the others to Bobonong, amidst further allegations of cruelty on the part of Modisaotsile's men.

At this point Malema got a lawyer. For years, diKgosi and others in the Protectorate had used South African lawyers to look after their financial interests and defend them against legal charges lodged by whites. But Malema was the first subordinate group leader who thought of using one to take a Kgosi to court. Malema employed Emanuel Gluckmann, a Johannesburg attorney, to claim on behalf of BaBirwa the sum of £40,000 for losses and damages. For Gluckmann's services, Malema promised to pay 1,000 head of cattle.

Gluckmann's appearance caused an uproar inside the Government. Any case against Khama would affect the officials in Mafikeng, because Khama had merely acted as their agent. Protectorate officials needed a way of preventing the case from reaching the court. In 1922, therefore, they held an "inquiry" into BaBirwa complaints. and put Sir Herbert Sloley, an administrative official from Basutoland, in the chair.

The inquiry, held in Serowe, was intended to bury the complaints rather than address them. Government excluded Gluckmann from the proceedings, citing as an excuse the need to respect "native law and custom", and they threatened Malema with arrest should he refuse to attend. During the inquiry, Sloley did not permit Malema to sit and allowed him to be subjected to other forms of petty harassment. In his report ending the inquiry, Sloley rejected BaBirwa claims to compensation. Soon thereafter, Malema was banished from the Protectorate.

Gluckmann then launched a press campaign. In a long newspaper article later published as the pamphlet, *The Tragedy of the Ababirwas and Some Reflections on Sir Herbert Sloley's Report,* Gluckmann tried to influence public opinion in South Africa against the Protectorate Government. Something of an outcry was raised, but it gave Malema and his people little benefit. In 1925 some of the BaBirwa won a small concession by being allowed to settle at Molalatau, 25 kms. southeast of Bobonong. In 1944, Malema's exile was ended and he settled at Molalatau, where he died sixteen years later.

BaKgatla bagaMmanaana

In the early 1930s trouble developed between the BaKgatla bagaMmanaana of Mosopa under Kgosi Gobuamang and their

MoNgwaketse Kgosi e kgolo, Bathoen II. By 1933 the conflict had grown to a point where officials felt it posed a threat to the existence of the Protectorate. It was partly their own fault. Instead of attempting to bring the two men together, local officials allowed Bathoen to deal with Gobuamang in an absolute manner. Eventually the BaKgatla went into open rebellion.

For decades the BaKgatla had lived amiably alongside the BaNgwaketse. Before 1876 they were established as an independent morafe, and afterwards they accepted the status of moratshwana ("junior allies"), which left the BaKgatla Kgosi with all of his traditional powers. The BaKgatla did not pay tribute to the BaNgwaketse, but were obligated to assist them in times of war which they did against the BaLete in 1881, the Boers in 1899-1902 and the Germans and Boer rebels in 1914-1918.

Colonial rule partly affected this arrangement. The Protectorate recognized only the Kgosi in Kanye as their tax collector in the Bangwaketse Reserve and gave the Kgosi in Mosopa no commission (the BaKgatla Kgosi was given a share, however, by the BaNgwaketse Kgosi). Under the British, Kgosi Bathoen I forced the BaKgatla to abolish bogwera and bojale, which they resented. Bathoen I and his son, Seepapitso, persecuted members of an independent church movement in Kanye led by Moruti Mothowagae Motlogelwa, and tension grew when the BaKgatla then built a church in Mosopa for Mothowagae's followers. Other disputes also arose. In all cases, however, the BaNgwaketse and BaKgatla resolved their own differences. Disputes were treated as domestic matters, not the business of outside parties.

Not long after Bathoen II assumed power in 1928, the policy towards the BaKgatla shifted dramatically. The new episode was touched with irony. BaKgatla Kgosi Gobuamang was then eighty-three years old. Bathoen a mere nineteen. The MoKgatla mogolo welcomed the teenage MoNgwaketse's coronation in the belief that his "senior ally" would allow Gobuamang to continue governing affairs at Mosopa and settling problems with Kanye as in the past. It was not to be. Though young, Bathoen entered bogosi determined to rule with a strong hand. Perhaps Seepapitso's assassination had toughened him, as had the troubles during the regency period. Bathoen may have also been influenced by his uncle and friend Tshekedi Khama, who was building a strong government in GammaNgwato. Within a year, the headstrong Bathoen clashed with the stubborn old Gobuamang.

The trouble began over health services. In early 1930 the Seventh Day Adventist medical missionaries agreed with Bathoen to expand

The young Kgosi Bathoen II

Kgosi Gobuamang

health services in the Reserve in return for a fixed annual payment. Bathoen consulted only with his people in Kanye, then imposed a 2/- (2 shillings) levy on every adult male in the Reserve. Gobuamang refused to collect it, and he had good reasons. His people disliked an increase in the tax burden and had recently opposed SDA missionaries evangelizing among the BaKgatla and reviving old, unpleasant religious divisions in Mosopa. Bathoen would not listen. He demanded that Gobuamang's people pay the levy. The MoKgatla replied that the hills and plains of Mosopa belonged to the MoNgwaketse, but the BaKgatla and their money belonged to himself. Deeply angered, Bathoen decided to remove Gobuamang.

Bathoen received help in getting rid of the old man from A.L. Cuzen, then Resident Magistrate in Kanye. Like many other officials, Cuzen believed British power should be exercised through diKgosi. Cuzen worried somewhat about Bathoen's independent streak but remained convinced that Government should uphold his authority. Cuzen therefore advised his superior in Mafikeng, Resident Commissioner Charles Rey, that strong action should be taken against Gobuamang. Rey hesitated. He was new to the Protectorate. Unlike the "old hands" he disliked rule through strong diKgosi, or what he called "chiefly autocracy". He therefore ordered Cuzen to suppress the health levy. Rey agreed with Cuzen, however, that Gobuamang was a potential threat to good order.

Within a few months, Rey and Gobuamang were at loggerheads. In August 1930 at a Kanye kgotla debate, Rey looked on while the MoKgatla complained about the levy and Bathoen's failure to pay him Hut Tax commission. Bathoen then became upset and said he wanted Gobuamang transferred to Kanye. Gobuamang, who

became agitated, spoke of "guns going off". He was referring to previous threats of violence voiced by some BaNgwaketse. But Rey mistook his words and thought Gobuamang was threatening Bathoen. When Bathoen closed the kgotla with a call for Gobuamang's removal, Rey promptly backed Bathoen and declared:

> I order and direct that Gobuamang shall within one month leave Mosopa and come and live at Kanye.

Rey had no legal authority to issue such an order in this manner, a fact that would later embarrass him.

By the end of the appointed month, Gobuamang was still in Mosopa. The BaKgatla Mmanaana were also boycotting meetings called by Bathoen. Rey then sent mounted police under a white officer, along with a BaNgwaketse mophato, to bring in Gobuamang. When the force arrived on 29 September, it was met by a much larger body of BaKgatla, who refused to surrender their Kgosi. They were willing to place Gobuamang under Government protection, but they would not allow him to become a prisoner of the BaNgwaketse. The British and BaNgweketse then withdrew, empty-handed.

Soon after this showdown, Gobuamang left for Mafikeng in order to appeal directly to Rey. The next day, Cuzen arrived in Mosopa to find him gone. Cuzen, thinking the old man had fled, seized Gobuamang's son as a hostage and dispatched several search parties to look for Gobuamang. Meanwhile, old Gobuamang, unaware that Government considered him a fugitive, continued his leisurely journey towards Mafikeng. Early in the morning of 3 October, Cuzen's assistant, Stanley Langton, discovered Gobuamang at Ramotswa, where he was spending the night as guest of Kgosi Seboko of the BaLete. Gobuamang surrendered on condition that Langton forward his complaints to Rey. Langton agreed and attached a memo asking that the MoKgatla be heard.

Rey then softened his position on BaKgatla grievances. He soon learned that Bathoen was still collecting the levy against his orders and had violated established practice in failing to give Gobuamang a share of the Hut Tax. Rey was ready, in fact, to return Gobuamang to Mosopa. But when Rey heard Cuzen say that Gobuamang's grandson, Diratsame, held radical opinions and that old Gobuamang wanted Diratsame to succeed him, he once more changed his mind. Gobuamang could return, he said, but not as Kgosi. His son, Kgabosetso, whom Cuzen considered "safe", would hold that position. Gobuamang refused this condition and stayed put in Kanyè.

For the next year, matters remained deadlocked. Neither the Government nor Bathoen wanted Gobuamang back in Mosopa, but neither wanted to take responsibility for keeping him in Kanye. In January 1931 Rey washed his hands of the affair by handing Gobuamang over to Bathoen, claiming "native law and custom" would have to deal with him. Some Kanye residents wanted to be done with the whole affair, but Bathoen opposed releasing Gobuamang for fear it would be seen as a defeat. Finally, in September 1931, Bathoen accepted the BaKgatla Mmanaana's offer to pay a fine of twenty-five cattle, as a gesture to secure Gobuamang's release. Then, believing the now eighty-six-year-old Gobuamang's health was failing, Bathoen allowed him to return to Mosopa.

Within months Bathoen tried to punish the MoKgatla again. Bathoen was angered when he summoned Gobuamang to meetings and the MoKgatla sent representatives instead. In April 1932, Bathoen and Cuzen went to Mosopa, and Cuzen backed Bathoen's demand that Gobuamang and twelve of his followers leave the Bangwaketse Reserve. For the sake of peace, Gobuamang said he was willing to go. At the end of the meeting, all of the BaKgatla present declared their desire to follow their Kgosi into exile. Several weeks later, Kgosi Kgari Sechele told Government that Gobuamang's group was welcome to resettle in the Kweneng.

Before any action was taken, calmer heads prevailed. In July, with Cuzen away on leave, another magistrate, named Claude Ledeboer, was sent to Mosopa to assess how many BaKgatla wished to leave. After reviewing the files and talking with the BaKgatla, Ledeboer criticized the Government's handling of Gobuamang and asked that a proper inquiry into the whole matter be held before anyone was removed. Ledeboer was successful, and the inquiry was set for August.

Then, more trouble started. Bathoen delayed the inquiry by going on a long hunting trip to GammaNgwato. After returning in October, he sent a mophato to Mosopa with instructions to build houses for a group of BaNgwaketse and their leader, who was being sent to rule the BaKgatla. A large group of BaKgatla sent them home. The next morning, the mophato were back, led by Bathoen. This time the BaKgatla disarmed the BaNgwaketse, fortunately without any bloodshed (Gobuamang had warned his people against using violence). Humiliated and bitter, Bathoen returned to Kanye.

When the inquiry was finally held in December 1932, the time for reconciliation seemed to have passed. Speakers from both sides traded insults, and the BaKgatla expressed the desire to have their

own village independent of Bathoen. The chairman, Vivien Ellenberger, was unsympathetic. To him the issue was simply "subjects" (BaKgatla) obeying their "chief" (Bathoen). He made no attempt to bring the two groups together. Ledeboer, who understood Gobuamang's wish to restore the working arrangement that operated before Bathoen II's installation, was unable to attend.

By supporting Bathoen and ignoring Gobuamang's grievance, the British had landed themselves in a dilemma. Creating a special BaKgatla Mmanaana reserve was out of the question, because other groups such as BaKalanga Nswazwi would want the same thing. Resettlement in the Kweneng was also risky, because at the time that Reserve was unsettled by pro-Sebele agitation. Officials dismissed as preposterous Ellenberger's proposal to send them back to their original homeland in the Transvaal, and Kgosi Molefi showed no interest in having his long-lost cousins live in the Kgatleng. Resident Commissioner Rey also dismissed the idea of exiling Gobuamang to Ghanzi, because it would be expensive, unpopular with the white farmers there and it would be difficult to obtain legal authorization for such a move.

Finally, Rey decided to order Gobuamang to live in Kanye. Gobuamang would be replaced in Mosopa with Bathoen's own representative. When Rey summoned Gobuamang and told him in front of Bathoen of his decision, the old MoKgatla said that Rey and Bathoen could "go to hell". If they wanted him in Kanye, they would have to take him by force.

In April 1933, Rey sent an official to Mosopa to do just that. He was met by about 400 men who refused to hand over their Kgosi. Rey was prepared. With an arrest warrant ready, he dispatched a force of fourteen officers (thirteen of them white) under his Assistant, R.O.M. Reilly, together with auxilliary personnel, to arrest the MoKgatla. He assumed that Africans believed in the power of whites and was confident his men would meet no resistance. Rey was mistaken. When Reilly entered the Mosopa kgotla on 8 April, a trap had been set. He met a small group of elders, who offered to lead Reilly to Gobuamang, allegedly sick in bed. As Reilly's men strung out in order to pass between houses and down winding paths, suddenly the air echoed with the sound of whistles. Hundreds of BaKgatla then appeared holding knobkerries and knitting needles, which some used to poke the British. Surrounded and divided, Reilly's men kept their heads and continued to demand Gobuamang. The crowd responded they were "ready to die". Reilly then decided to leave empty-handed, and the BaKgatla let him pass.

Rey was in a corner. Gobuamang's people had called his bluff and showed that the Protectorate was unable to enforce its authority. In fact, Rey lacked enough men and arms to put down a rebellion. Against Gobuamang's estimated one thousand armed men, Rey had several dozen police. He could ask the South African and Southern Rhodesian governments for support, but this, too, would be a confession of weakness. Rey was not a man to use diplomacy, especially with Africans. Rather than give in or seek compromise, he was determined to show that he was boss.

Rey proposed to solve the problem by bringing in airplanes and bombing Mosopa. Ignoring the attrocious consequences of such an act, Rey's mind produced only advantages. Bombing would be inexpensive, would risk no European lives or property (two traders lived in Mosopa and both were Indians), and it would destroy no permanent buildings, just "mud huts". Rey was even convinced that other Africans in the Protectorate would accept it.

> The destruction of the village of Moshupa is ... entirely in accord with native law and custom ... the normal consequence of disobedience to ... a chief. It would be thoroughly understood and seen as just by natives generally.

Rey's proposal was endorsed by the High Commissioner, Herbert Stanley, and forwarded to London for approval. Meanwhile, Mosopa was sealed off by police, and the airstrips at Mochudi and Gaberones were prepared for receiving the bombers.

Wiser heads were then spurred into action. London rejected Rey's proposal and suggested he seek military assistance from Southern Rhodesia. Rey was then approached by Rev. Johan Reyneke of Mochudi and J.C. Knobel, retired missionary, part-time minister and trader in Molepolole, who offered to act as mediators. Rey was sceptical but allowed them to pass through the police lines at Mosopa. They were received warmly by Gobuamang, who agreed to surrender. In spite of protests from the BaKgatla, he drove away in Knobel's car.

Gobuamang never returned. Rey convicted him of resisting arrest, confined him for several months in the Gaberones compound, then barred him from returning to the Bangwaketse Reserve. He then settled in Thamaga, where in 1935 he was joined by nearly 5,000 people from Mosopa, half the town's population. In 1940 Gobuamang died at the age of 95.

Gobuamang's surrender and the resettlement of his followers in Thamaga was a hollow victory for Bathoen. He had upheld his authority, but in the process he lost the respect of the BaKgatla, one

quarter of all his subjects. Half of the BaKgatla left him altogether to be with Gobuamang in the Kweneng. The other half remained, but they did not treat Bathoen as their Kgosi. Bathoen placed his representative in Mosopa, but the BaKgatla there resented his presence and often ignored his authority.

The BaKalanga bakaNswazwi

During the 1930s and 1940s the BaKalanga bakaNswazwi were involved in a long and bitter struggle against their BaNgwato overlords. In many ways their struggle was like that of the BaKgatla Mmanaana. They did not seek independence from the Kgosi e kgolo nor did they wish to confront the British, but the Government ignored their grievances and eventually forced them into rebellion. The BakaNswazwi, however, paid a much higher price for their defiance than the BaKgatla Mmanaana. Instead of being allowed to resettle nearby, they were made landless exiles in Southern Rhodesia.

The BakaNswazwi are one of many IKalanga-speaking communities of Botswana. Like BaTswana, the BaKalanga are a people of many different origins. BakaNswazwi originate from a small group of BaPedi who, sometime before the eighteenth century, migrated into Bulilamengwe (an area around Tutume today known as BuKalanga. BaTswana say "Bokalaka"). There they came under the Mengwe She (something like a Kgosi), then regional governor for the Mambo of Rozwi in Zimbabwe, and became part of IKalanga society.

During the troubles of the late nineteenth BaKalanga came under BaNgwato rule (for more information on this period, see chapter 10). In the 1870s the ruling Nzinda ward of the BakaNswazwi took temporary refuge in Shoshong. Their early association with the BaNgwato may explain why, in the 1890s, Khama III used the bakaNswazwi She in northern GammaNgwato to be "his eyes and ears" among the other BaKalanga settled there. At that time, British rule had also been established, and the BakaNswazwi She assisted Khama in collecting tax and organizing labour. The BakaNswazwi, in other words, occupied a junior position in GammaNgwato, but enjoyed a special status in "Bokalaka".

This working arrangement ended with Tshekedi. In his dealings with BaKalanga, Tshekedi bypassed the BakaNswazwi and used his own, BaNgwato, appointees to govern the area. The BakaNswazwi leader then was She John Madawo Nswazwi VIII, who had been in

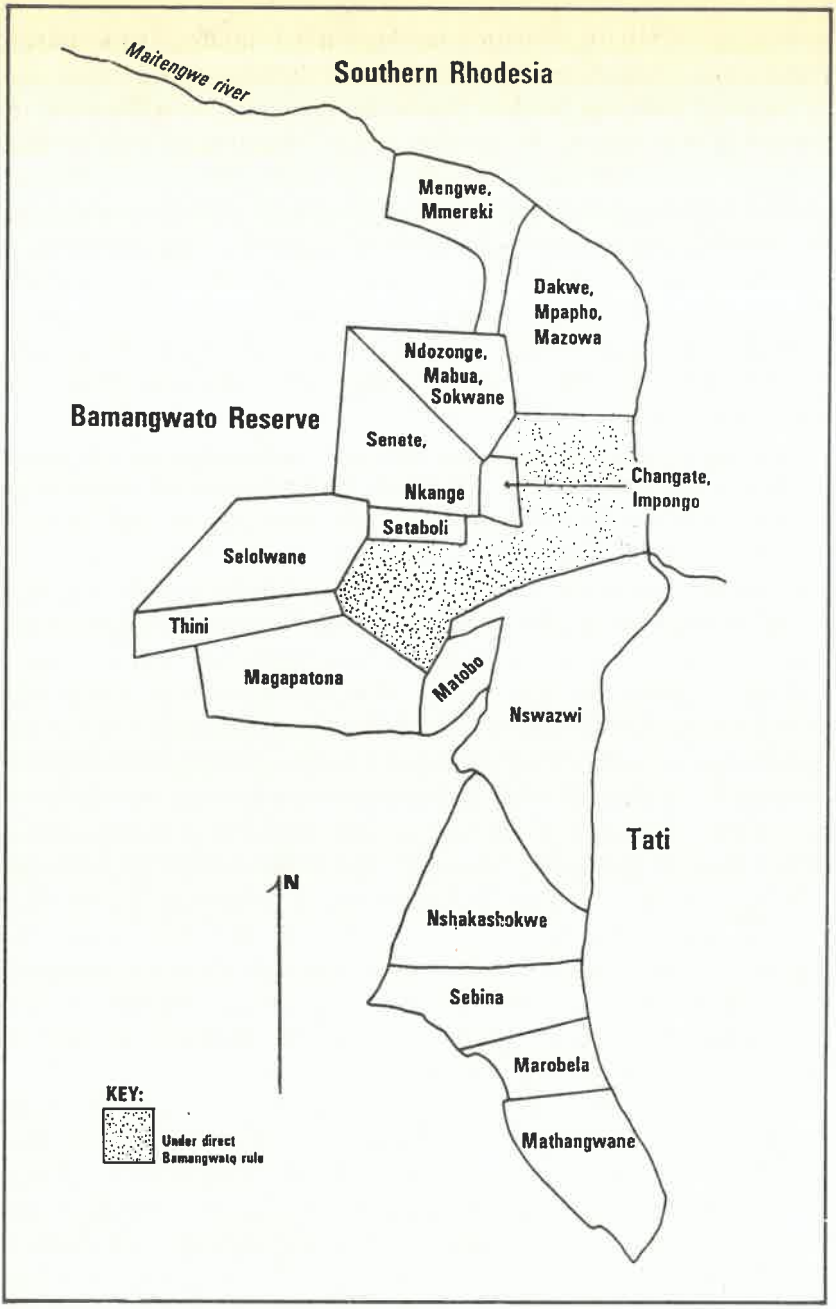
power since 1910. In 1926 the troubles started. Tshekedi ordered the BaKalanga, BakaNswazwi included, to build a fence along the Southern Rhodesian border. This order coincided with the onset of the ploughing season. At the time, John Nswazwi and his people had not paid their tax, and when the MoNgwato tax collector arrived at Nswazwi's village, the BakaNswazwi used his presence as an excuse for deserting the fence-building project. She Nswazwi is reported to have said, "people cannot eat wire". Word then reached Serowe that the project had been abandoned, and Tshekedi immediately sent Phetu Mphoeng to investigate Nswazwi's "insubordination". Phetu fined the She and several of his followers two beasts each.

Thereafter, Nswazwi's people and other BaKalanga felt the pinch of Tshekedi's rule. Under Tshekedi, BaNgwato were allowed to expand into the fertile lands and rich pastures of BuKalanga. BaKalanga farmers had less land to cultivate, fewer crops to sell in the Francistown market and a smaller area for their cattle to graze. As the BaNgwato cattlemen advanced, BaKalanga had no retreat. The Tati stood to the east and Southern Rhodesia to the north.

As these pressures grew, John Nswazwi spoke out. His words were provoked by Tshekedi, who had imposed a cattle levy on the BaKalanga to help pay for the Kgosi's proposed trip to London (see chapter 3). In October 1929 Nswazwi wrote a petition, listing many grievances, and sent it directly to the Resident Commissioner, rather than to Tshekedi. Nswazwi first noted his earlier fine and Tshekedi's failure to issue Nswazwi with a percentage of the Hut Tax he had collected. Then he spoke for the BaKalanga. He complained that Tshekedi had imposed the levy without consulting the BaKalanga, that Serowe was neglecting services in his community, education in particular, and that BaSarwa herders of BaNgwato had destroyed BaKalanga cattle posts.

The petition brought Nswazwi directly into conflict with Tshekedi. The Resident Commissioner did order Tshekedi to halt the levy, but the Serowe magistrate, W.E. Mangan, did not enforce it. Tshekedi, wanting to punish Nswazwi, ordered the BakaNswazwi to Serowe. Nswazwi went to Mafikeng to ask the RC, R.M. Daniel, for protection. Daniel merely referred the matter to Tshekedi. The Kgosi e kgolo agreed to hold an inquiry. Instead, Nswazwi and his people were brought to Serowe and tried. The judgement was that the She and five others had to move to Serowe immediately.

By then the BakaNswazwi had found some allies. One was Robert MacFarlane, a European Advisory Council member, recruited by a



Map 4 BuKalanga in 1943 (after Tshekedi's Grouping Policy)

party of BaKalanga headed by Mpubuli Matenge, a local clerk. Regional newspapers had also published unfavourable reports of Tshekedi's cattle levy. MacFarlane and the press influenced the new Resident Commissioner, Charles Rey, who ordered an official inquiry into the BakaNswazwi affair. In June 1930, the new Serowe magistrate, Gerald Nettelton, held the inquiry. Nettelton ruled in Tshekedi's favour. Nswazwi and five others were banished to Serowe, and Tshekedi's representative, Rasebolai Kgamane, was sent with a party of BaNgwato to rule the BakaNswazwi.

The BaKalanga resisted Tshekedi's attempts to rule them and succeeded in reaching Rey. They refused to pay the cattle levy and reported incidents of BaNgwato misdeeds in BuKalanga to MacFarlane, who passed them on to Rey. K.T. Motsete and Simon Ratshosa also wrote on their behalf (see chapter 6 for these two men). Finally, seven leading BakaNswazwi wrote Rey a declaration. It listed the long-standing complaints and called for John Nswazwi's return, full independence from BaNgwato rule and the promotion of IKalanga. In response to this appeal and the many other complaints that had reached his desk, Rey ordered a new inquiry. Held in February 1932, the inquiry convinced Rey that some of the BakaNswazwi complaints were just.

Rey was unwilling, however, to meet BakaNswazwi demands. If he allowed them to become independent of Serowe, Rey would risk destroying the Reserve system on which British rule throughout the Protectorate was based. All Rey did was to find a temporary solution to the Tshekedi-Nswazwi quarrel. He got Tshekedi to release Nswazwi, in return for the She's allegiance to the Kgosi e kgolo and the payment of eighty-five cattle to meet Tshekedi's levy. The BakaNswazwi, in other words, only ransomed their leader from the BaNgwato and received from the British no guarantees of protection from their overlords.

For the next ten years, they and other BaKalanga lived at the mercy of Serowe. Tshekedi's administration increased its control by concentrating BaKalanga in villages and ruling them through BaNgwato governors and selected, "loyal" boShe. Constant demands for labour were made, but BaKalanga mephato performed duties in BaNgwato areas. BuKalanga suffered from neglect. Tshekedi blocked local attempts to bring in Roman Catholic missionaries to provide health services and obstructed BaKalanga attempts to maintain K.T. Motsete's Tati Training Institute (see chapter 6). Land shortages increased, and more men entered the labour migration system in desperation.

During World War II, tensions in BuKalanga increased. Many

BaKalanga were forcibly recruited into the AAPC by Tshekedi's mephato, who employed such tactics as keeping women and children in kraals as hostages (see chapter 7). John Nswazwi, however, was eager to show his loyalty to the British and encouraged his men to enlist. Yet the She's relations with his BaNgwato overlords remained troubled. In 1942 Nswazwi got into a fight with the acting MoNgwato overseer. The following year, when Tshekedi arrived in Bukalanga to reallocate land, the She failed to attend a letsholo meeting out of fear for his life. Tshekedi promptly had Nswazwi brought to trial and convicted of "insubordination". Nswazwi appealed the case, but lost. In 1943 he entered prison and stayed there for the next eighteen months. Meanwhile, his people applied to the Southern Rhodesian Government for land but were turned down.

In 1945, when their She was released from prison, the BakaNswazwi drifted rapidly towards rebellion. Before Nswazwi's prison term ended, Tshekedi met with the BaKalanga and told them that Nswazwi would not be allowed to return. Once free, however, Nswazwi went straight to his village where he was received as a hero. In February Tshekedi ordered Nswazwi back to Serowe and sent his representative, Tauyakgale, and a Bechuanaland Protectorate Police (BPP) officer, Capt. Langley, to fetch him. When they arrived at Nswazwi's place, Tauyakgale and Langely were greeted by a local Tshekedi loyalist named Nfakase Motsweta. The behaviour of Motsweta so angered other BakaNswazwi that they assaulted him. When Tauyakgale and Langely tried to intervene, they were stoned and forced to flee back to Serowe empty-handed. Motsweta had to be hospitalized.

The Government retaliated immediately. Assault on a white officer could not be tolerated. A BaNgwato mophato was armed with rifles, armoured cars and teargas were brought in from Southern Rhodesia, and planes were flown in from South Africa and Rhodesia to circle above Nswazwi's village. When the mophato arrived, accompanied by police, the BakaNswazwi had no choice but to surrender. John Nswazwi was arrested and 122 others were trucked to Serowe. Allegedly, the BaNgwato also pillaged Nswazwi's settlement. Punishment was then meted out. Nswazwi and thirty-five BakaNswazwi accused of being involved in the assault were banished south of 22^0 parallel and ended up in Mafikeng (the British tried to banish Nswazwi to Ghanzi, but he successfully appealed against the decision).

The BakaNswazwi who remained at their village then launched a resistance campaign. Veterans of World War II took the lead. In

September 1945 the ex-soldiers refused to accept their discharge payouts, and in June 1946 they boycotted the territory's victory parade. They and others in the village also elected their own acting headman, Nyena Chemela, and ignored Tshekedi's MoNgwato representative and his BaKalanga appointees. In return, the British refused to receive tax money directly from the BakaNswazwi. The BakaNswazwi, preparing for the worst, continued their search for refuge in the Crown Lands or Southern Rhodesia. The more vocal element began agitating for independence from Serowe. In August 1947, Tshekedi then ordered 150 of these agitators to live in Serowe, but they resisted by taking their case to court. They lost, but before they could appeal to the Privy Council in London (just as Tshekedi had done nearly twenty years before — see chapter 3), another tragedy had occurred.

She John Nswazwi VIII (left) with councillor M.A. Nyadza, 1946

With Protectorate courts and officials behind him, Tshekedi decided to crush BakaNswazwi resistance. In late September he sent Oteng Mphoeng and 2,000 men to subdue the village. While a BPP unit of thirteen Europeans and sixty-six Africans looked on as "observers", Mphoeng's men seized the wells as a means of forcing

the BakaNswazwi to submit. Many women and children then fled towards Southern Rhodesia. Within days, the BaNgwato advanced on the village, forced their way into houses, looted property of refugees and destroyed all unoccupied houses. They then rounded up persons trying to hide or return from Southern Rhodesia and detained them in a cattle kraal. A pregnant woman, Levuna Mpapho, died in the process.

In the area, a feeling of terror prevailed. Numerous reports were made of serious assaults, pillaging and other forms of unrestrained violence. Neighbouring BaKalanga, whom BaNgwato had forced to aid them in destroying property and rounding up cattle, began to flee as a result. BaKalanga either destroyed their cattle or tried to smuggle them across the border rather than allow them to fall into BaNgwato hands. By November, 1,600 refugees had crossed into Southern Rhodesia, while others were in hiding in the Protectorate or South Africa. Tshekedi tried to stop this exodus and prevent refugees from returning by having his men seal the border. Only those who submitted to his authority could return. The houses of the refugees were burnt, their valuable property seized and sold.

For years thereafter, John Nswazwi's people chose to live in exile. Rhodesian authorities reported high rates of malnutrition and disease among the refugees and forwarded their allegations of British and BaNgwato repression. In 1948 John Nswazwi and a small group of BaKalanga refugees in Mafikeng were permitted to join the BakaNswazwi in Southern Rhodesia. In the next decade over one hundred returned to the Protectorate. Most preferred living without land and being under a white-settler government than submitting to the rule of Tshekedi or the pro-Tshekedi men who replaced him after the BaNgwato Crisis of 1948 (see chapter 9). In 1958, many BakaNswazwi did come back. They settled at Marapong and began to bury their differences with the BaNgwato. John Nswazwi, however, remained in exile, where he died in 1960 at the approximate age of seventy-five years.

Subordinate groups and resistance

Ethnic or "tribal" differences do not explain why each of the subordinate groups described above resisted their Kgosi e kgolo. In these crises, group allegiance was determined by the way in which events unfolded and by the changes taking place around them at the time. During their struggles, neither Malema, Gobuamang nor Nswazwi received much support from the other BaBirwa, BagaMmanaana or BaKalanga communities.

These leaders and their people opposed the loss of established rights and privileges brought about by the exercise of absolute power on the part of the Kgosi e kgolo. They fought alone, perhaps because they lost their status among their fellow BaBirwa, BagaMmanaana and BaKalanga, as well.

In later years, however, the struggles of these three groups became important symbols for the younger generations reaching maturity. In the 1950s and 1960s many who wished to improve their group's position and self-respect used the examples of Malema, Gobuamang and Nswazwi to foster ethnic pride. And those who promoted nationalism and campaigned for human rights used them as rallying cries in their fight against "cheifly autocracy" and colonial rule.

Chapter 5

Popular Unrest in the Kgatleng

Between 1929 and 1940, the Kgatleng was the scene of disorder and quarrelling. Young Kgosi Molefi and his uncle, the ex-regent Isang, became arch enemies, and the elders failed to restore harmony in the kgotla. Protectorate officials, who wanted peace for the sake of efficient administration, intervened without success. In 1936 Resident Commissioner Rey suspended Molefi from bogosi, but troubles continued. In spite of his many faults, Molefi was a popular leader whom the BaKgatla wanted back as Kgosi. The struggle between officials and Molefi's followers, who employed new techniques of protest, persisted until World War II.

Molefi belonged to the new generation of young BaTswana who felt out of place and at odds with colonial society. Like Sebele II, Molefi rejected the Christian elite and became popular among commoners, and like Tshekedi he was outspoken in opposition to the colonial government. His adversaries included missionaries, Boers and even his own uncles. Young Molefi as well often turned his back on bogosi, as built up by his powerful uncle, Isang, and devoted his energies instead to common entertainment — cars, drink, sport, women and entertaining his friends, generally. When suspended, his anti-establishment banner was carried by his mother and a group of commoners led by Motsisi Ralefala and Kgosi Lebotse, who formed first a political society ("Ipelegeng"), then a chapter of the independent Zion Christian Church ("MaZioni"), to restore Molefi to the chieftaincy and oust the Kgatla royal elite then controlling the acting Kgosi. Their presence was felt into the World War II period, when they obstructed the government's conscription and women's support campaigns.

Throughout this time of troubles, the BaKgatla also suffered, like many other Protectorate peoples, from the perpetual drought and worldwide depression. In 1933 alone, between twelve and fifteen thousand head of cattle died of hunger and thirst in the Kgatleng. The prices offered for those which remained were half the going rates of the late 1920s. Drought or no drought, depression or no, people needed cash more than ever. Taxes went up in the 1930s, and so did the cost of everyday clothing, blankets and household goods. The sorghum (mabele) that people managed to grow when the rains

failed often ran out before the next harvest. Grain then had to be bought from the shops, but with what?

The 1930s was a time of hunger. "The thing that troubles me", wrote a teenage girl living on her own and looking after her sister's child, "is the starvation". She went on:

> When I wrote last time I had not eaten anything for about four days. When I walk my breath gives out. I tie myself with a belt to hold in my stomach. I always feel very sorry for the child, who keeps crying and crying. Could you not send us just a little meal, just to keep ourselves going? We always rest our heads wearily when the sun sets. If you could see us you would cry.

She was writing to her brother, working in South Africa. Like thousands of people in the Protectorate, he had gone for work there because there was no other place to get cash. In the 1930s the BaKgatla became dependent on labour migration. At any one time, at least two out of every five BaKgatla men above eighteen years were away from the Kgatleng, and nearly every man left at one time or another.

Women, many young enough to be doing JC, also found their way to South Africa. Old women in Mochudi today still tell the story of how, more than 50 years ago, they walked with groups of other girls all the way to Rustenburg (from Mochudi, about 190 kms.), sleeping under the stars at night. Getting odd jobs, somehow making their way, they raised the funds to pay for a rail fare on the Rustenburg train to Johannesburg, where domestic workers were in demand.

Only a small percentage of BaKgatla worked in the mines. Some men and women worked on Boer fruit and tobacco farms in the Transvaal. Most preferred, however, looking for "above ground" jobs in the cities. Many worked as labourers for the Krugersdorp and Johannesburg "municipalities" (city governments), while others found semi-skilled employment in small factories, shops, assembly plants, warehouses, mining offices and other large establishments. Apart from the roughly ten per cent who actually worked underground in the mines, the BaKgatla lived outside the hated mining compounds and in the freer suburbs of Newclare and Sophiatown. At work and at leisure, they rubbed shoulders with people from all over Southern Africa and were part of the new "township life" emerging on the Witwatersrand.

Working and living away from home brought its own hardships. Big cities and bright lights made life no less a struggle. Being black in the land of "baaskap" meant daily humiliation and bitterness at the hands of white employers. Wages were low, cash hard to save.

Demands for cash at home were always greater than a man could meet, and letters from hungry wives and relatives made working men feel helpless. Family problems at home had to remain unsolved for long periods, and fathers often discovered they could not support their children, much less their wives or sweethearts. Marriage and fidelity became luxuries fewer and fewer men could afford, and "I don't care" became the mask of behaviour more and more tried to wear.

If a man or woman died in South Africa, the corpse was buried there. Many BaKgatla lie forgotten in the Newclare and Sophiatown cemeteries, because their bodies would have decomposed on the rough and dusty journey back to the Kgatleng. Only in 1942, by which time roads had improved, did the workers form the BaKgatla Burial Society and attempt to return the dead to the Kgatleng for decent funerals. A bus was hired from a Boer named Trichardt (and nicknamed "Trigat"!), and the body was packed in ice, chipped from huge blocks, for the trip home.

Thus, when Molefi became their Kgosi, many BaKgatla were steadily becoming part of two worlds. A man or woman might spend most of the year in South Africa, returning only on visits. Yet each one remained tied to family obligations in the Kgatleng, and each remained a subject of the BaKgatla Kgosi and a taxpayer of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. In the 1930s, the Kgosi or his representative visited South Africa regularly to meet the BaKgatla there, bring them up to date on Kgatleng matters and collect their taxes.

With many men away for much of the year, day-to-day business in the Kgatleng was conducted by those who were able to live entirely within the Protectorate. They tended to be older men, wealthy in cattle, and familiar with the ways the colonial Government liked to have things run. They were part of the old order, key members of the Dutch Reformed Church, literate in Setswana and English, knowledgeable in customary law and active in the kgotla. They sat on the school committee, worked as tax collectors, set up borehole syndicates, helped to represent the BaKgatla on the Advisory Council in Mafikeng and served as Molefi's advisors. The most important members of this "old guard" were Molefi's royal uncles: Isang Pilane, Mmothi Pilane, Komane Pilane, Sefhako Pilane and several others.

From the beginning of his bogosi, Molefi seldom listened to these men. The young Kgosi had none of their habits. They were a straight-laced group, punctual at meetings, formal in their behaviour and business-minded. Molefi was usually late to the

kgotla, if not absent, and disinclined to keep his uncles informed of his whereabouts. Without notice, he rode off to the cattle post or drove across the border, staying away from Mochudi for days and weeks on end. Molefi, too, had a liking for brandy, and talk about his drinking became common. In November 1934 at a formal kgotla, the BaKgatla appointed six "guardians" (all but one his uncles) to keep a close eye on the wayward Kgosi, but Molefi had no trouble evading them.

Part of the problem was Molefi's great fear and dislike of Isang. Molefi had been taught by his mother, Seingwaeng, to stay away from his senior uncle out of a dread that Isang would somehow bring about Molefi's death and seize bogosi. Isang had also greatly insulted Seingwaeng, increasing bad feelings. In 1932 mutual hatred between Molefi and Isang nearly erupted into violence at a huge letsholo. The Government intervened to restore order, and in 1934 they held an inquiry to terminate the conflict. Isang was found guilty of disrespect towards Molefi and trying to undermine his authority. He was fined heavily and banished from Mochudi for six months.

Matters did not end there. Molefi and Seingwaeng were also convinced that Isang had stolen the cattle and gold coins left by old Linchwe as Molefi's inheritance. And in 1935 the government once more held a big inquiry in Mochudi to resolve this dispute. Isang, returned from exile, proved that he had carefully looked after Linchwe's estate and readily handed over to Molefi his cattle and money. In spite of this second victory over Isang, Molefi found it difficult to satisfy his uncles and function as Kgosi. Among the old men, Molefi had always had his loyal supporters, such as Mmothi, Sefako, Amos Kgamanyane Pilane, and Thomas Phiri, who distrusted Isang and advised Molefi in his best interests. Molefi tried to perform his kgotla duties, made decisions on behalf of his people, attended Advisory Council meetings and trusted his advisors to carry out their responsibilities. Molefi, nevertheless, had no heart for administration. His interests lay elsewhere.

Molefi belonged to the young generation of Africans who were breaking free of traditional constraints and taking up new forms of recreation and pleasure. When a schoolboy at Cape Town, Molefi acquired a taste for township life through his association with a group of Cape Coloured "skampies". And as Kgosi, Molefi developed this interest by making frequent trips to Johannesburg. There, in the townships where many young BaKgatla workers lived, a whole new leisure culture was emerging. Young Africans were creating their own music, working traditional songs into jazz

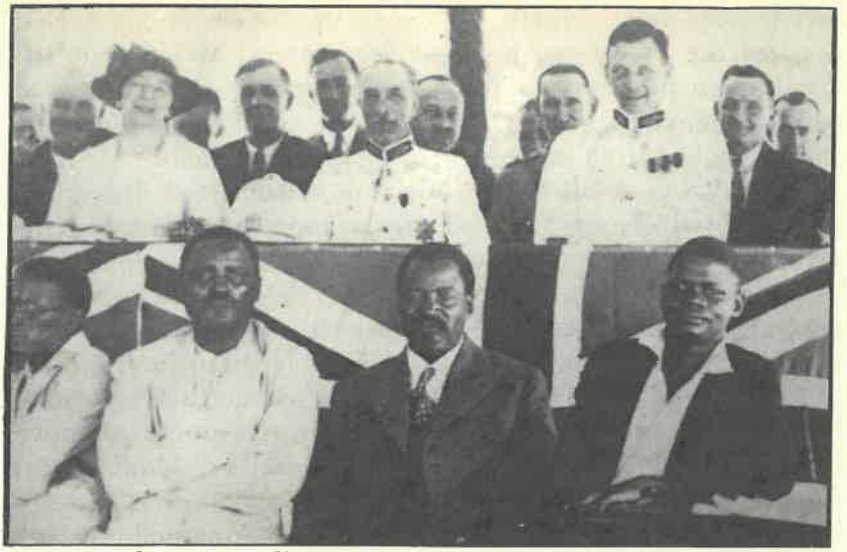
melodies and writing lyrics to express their feelings about life. The better-to-do township dwellers also revelled in new clothing fashions, promenaded in public with their sweethearts, and organized their evenings and weekends around cars, shebeens, cinemas, casual sex and sport.

Molefi and young BaKgatla migrant workers brought some of this lifestyle back with them to the Kgatleng. The first football club in the Protectorate was established in Mochudi, and Molefi was its star player. With his young friends, drawn from all levels of society, Molefi shocked conservative elders by holding drinking and dancing parties. The Kgosi and his "young bloods", who lived by their own rules, simply ignored the clucking tongues of Mochudi. Molefi spent a lot of money entertaining his friends and even more feeding his greatest passion: fast motor cars. Sometimes wild and irresponsible, and occasionally drunk, Molefi zoomed up and down all the dirt tracks between Mochudi and the major towns of the region. In his first four years as Kgosi, Molefi turned five glistening automobiles into scrap!

Molefi showed none of the usual courtesies that white colonials were accustomed to. When summoned to official meetings, he often came late or behaved in a sullen manner. Unlike Isang, who openly displayed his loyalty to the Protectorate, Molefi was indifferent to official policies and obstructed public projects they were trying to initiate. Molefi frequentely clashed with the DRC missionary, Wilhelm Krige, and disrupted church services. He also interfered with the schools, which were governed by Molefi's uncles and DRC missionaries through the school committee, and run by the committee's appointed headmaster, A.M. Tsoebebe.

In 1936 the colonial Government, with the support of the elders, decided to remove Molefi from bogosi. Their patience had been exhausted after a crowd of Molefi's friends, most of them members of his regiment, MaChama, went on a drinking spree in October and roamed about Mochudi hitting people and threatening the headmaster and two teachers. They were having fun, immitating the "amalaita" street gangs who went about townships in the Rand frightening innocent pedestrians. They would ask, "D'ya want an egg?" and, when the trembling person tried to please these ruffians by answering "Yes", he got a cuff in the face. Within a few weeks after calm was restored, a large kgotla was assembled to hear complaints against Molefi and the MaChama, Resident Commissioner Charles Rey presiding. Rey suspended Molefi from bogosi. Molefi's younger brother, Mmusi, was appointed to act, and around him were grouped the uncles who had failed, for the past

seven years, to control Molefi. Foremost among these was Isang Pilane.



Mmusi Pilane's installation. Front row (l to r): Bathoen II, Kgosi Seboko of the BaLete, Isang, Mmusi. Second row: Rey with his wife (left), Arden-Clarke (right).

Molefi's suspension caused little joy. For all his recklessness and immaturity, Molefi was a popular figure in the Kgatleng. In contrast to Isang, Molefi was patient and fair in his kgotla judgements and never took things personally. He could be rowdy and had a habit of getting into fistfights when drunk, but Molefi bore no grudges and treated people alike, no matter how rich or poor, regardless of colour or social status. In his dealings with people, Molefi was open-handed. People also admired his courage in standing up to the old guard as well as to Whites. For this and his legitimate claim to bogosi, commoners especially were willing to forgive his irresponsibility and indiscipline. Thus, when Molefi was thrown out and Mmusi brought in under a group of advisors led by Isang, the public resented colonial interference in BaKgatla affairs. Resistance to Mmusi, his advisors and the colonial government soon began to sprout.

The first signs of revolt were seen in the Dutch Reformed Church mission. The Reverend Thomas Phiri, an old enemy of Isang and a supporter of Molefi, had been the DRC clergyman at Sikwane on the Madikwe river since 1892. When Molefi was suspended, Phiri broke from the church and established the Bakgatla Free Church, with members in Sikwane and Mochudi. Molefi supported Phiri's

church. Molefi had been at loggerheads with the DRC missionary Krige for several years, and DRC adherents had given evidence to Rey that helped Molefi get suspended. The Free Church failed to survive very long. Mmusi, following the advice of his uncles, declared the Free Church illegal. Rey banned Molefi from the Kgatleng to prevent him from drumming up support for such political activities. The DRC then cut off Phiri's retreat by dismissing him from the church and stopping his salary.

Within weeks, another new form of protest emerged. This group called itself "Ipelegeng", named after an appeal Molefi made in the kgotla the moment he had been suspended. The term implied that the public should create its own means of dealing with unpopular government (and of getting Molefi back into bogosi). It was formed by Ralefala Motsisi, an ex-taxi driver in Johannesburg and resident of Rampedi ward, and by Kgosi Lebotse, a school-teacher friend of Molefi and member of Ralebotsa ward. They were supported by two of Molefi's closest royal relatives: his mother, Mohumagadi Seingwaeng, and her husband, Bakgatla (Bakgatla was Molefi's junior uncle and son of Linchwe in the third lapa and accepted Seingwaeng after Isang had rejected her).

Ipelegeng members, almost entirely commoners, paid dues and collected money for the hiring of lawyers to assist Molefi in appealing against his suspension order. Motsisi and Lebotse's group also bypassed the kgotla and tried to deal directly with the colonial administration by writing letters to the District Commissioner and taking the Protectorate to court. Members also prayed for Molefi's return and employed dingaka from outside the Kgatleng to perform rituals for the same purpose. Soon, Ipelegeng groups sprang up in the Kgatleng and among BaKgatla working in South Africa. When it became clear that Ipelegeng was growing in popularity, an inquiry was held with Mmusi in the chair. All confessed members in Mochudi, except Mmusi's mother, were fined heavily, and Ipelegeng was declared illegal because its members recognised Molefi, rather than Mmusi, as "chief".

Months later, Ipelegeng returned in a different form. Motsisi, Lebotse, Seingwaeng and Bakgatla travelled to Morija outside Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal and there received the blessing of Bishop Joseph Lekganyane to establish a Mochudi chapter of the Zion Christian Church. The MaZioni, as they were soon known, functioned like Ipelegeng by sending money to support Molefi outside the Kgatleng and help pay his legal fees. Their religious services, too, were intended to gain divine support for Molefi's return. Like the Bakgatla Free Church, the presence of

the ZCC challenged the DRC monopoly and defied Mmusi's ruling that only one church could be established in the Kgatleng. But because they were part of a large church organization and steered clear of open political protest, the ZCC were harder to remove. The Government had little interest in crushing religious groups to please diKgosi, and some administrators favoured the idea of religious freedom. Mmusi, who disliked being acting Kgosi and was growing tired of his uncles, was also reluctant to challenge his own mother in public.

The ZCC stood for certain principles that also attracted public sympathy. Apart from being pro-Molefi, the MaZioni opposed many of the things that had begun to threaten family and social life in the 1930s. They were against drinking, smoking, profanity, public indecency, open sex and disrespect towards others. They were part of a conservative type of protest against the erosion of morals brought about by labour migration and the break-up of families and the community. It was well-known that Seingwaeng had often reprimanded Molefi for his behaviour when Kgosi. The ZCC was much more than a group to restore Molefi to bogosi; they wished as well to restore a strict moral code in the Kgatleng.

In 1938 Seingwaeng used her powers as Mohumagadi against the administration. The Protectorate and Mmusi's advisors (still led by Isang) needed Seingwaeng's support in forming new mephato. No mephato had been formed since 1928, and even Mmusi himself remained uninititiated. Unless new regiments came into existence, the "tribal administration" would also lack labour to carry out projects in the Kgatleng. Isang convinced the colonial administration that the people wanted to follow tradition and form mephato. The Protectorate agreed: colonial rulers used mephato for building and clearing roads, rounding up cattle and digging wells. Seingwaeng said no. Unless Molefi instructed her to assist, she would not form a new female mophato alongside the male one. After months of delay, Resident Commissioner Arden-Clarke threatened to ban her from the Kgatleng unless she cooperated. Molefi, whom the Government also threatened, sent his mother instructions to do as they said. Seingwaeng complied, and in 1939 the mephato for men and women were duly initiated and named MaGata.

World War II began soon thereafter, and the Protectorate needed Seingwaeng's help once more. In 1941, when men were being recruited into the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps, Seingwaeng rallied her women followers to protest. They also opposed attempts by Government to involve the women in a "gifts and comforts"

scheme in support of BaKgatla servicemen. Seingwaeng's group failed to delay recruitment, but the Government feared that her obstruction of the gifts scheme would lower troop morale. They decided not to suppress Seingwaeng's activities, however, because that, too, might reduce BaKgatla commitment to the war effort. Knowing Seingwaeng to be the leader of the pro-Molefi group in the Kgatleng, the Government devised a plan to win her over. Molefi was weary of exile, deeply in debt and eager to return to bogosi. Arden-Clarke offered to end Molefi's suspension on condition that he enlist in the AAPC and help the Government recruit BaKgatla to serve in the war. Mmusi would be persuaded to enter the AAPC, and the Kgatleng would be run by men acceptable to Molefi and Seingwaeng. The government also saw this plan as a way of getting Ipelegeng and MaZioni "back into the tribe" and ending opposition to "tribal administration".

It worked. Mmusi joined the AAPC, Molefi backed recruitment and journeyed to North Africa and the Middle East to be with the BaKgatla companies. He was made Regimental Sergeant Major, the highest rank given to BaTswana (four others, including Kgari Sechele, the only other Kgosi who went to war, were appointed RSM's). Back in the Kgatleng, Seingwaeng swung her followers into line in support of the gifts scheme. A three-man regency was created, with Bakgatla as one of its members, Molefi B. Pilane and Amos K. Pilane being the other two. Only Amos was active, but he governed the Kgatleng effectively and kept Molefi closely informed about internal affairs.

At the war front, the BaKgatla revolt against the old guard continued. Young AAPC soldiers in "1987" Company, the only pure BaKgatla Company, formed the "Ipelegeng II Society" and took control of the unit from the older men. Encouraged by Molefi, they created a special fund to promote their interests after the war. They sent money to Molefi's lawyer in Mafikeng and put aside the remainder (some £400) for the purchase of land and the setting up of trading and transportation businesses for themselves. All the leaders of Ipelegeng II were commoners and made up of such people as Difatlhwe Seame, who got involved in nationalist politics in the 1960s.

At the conclusion of war, Molefi returned in triumph. He had played a very minor role in the war effort, apart from recruiting, but popular praises exaggerated his importance and made him into a mighty hero.

Modumo o o dumang kwa botsheka,
O duma kwa watleng la Egepeta.
Molefi o kopanye le Mosolini.
Go ntse ga nna 'Lethuthuu-thuu!'
Poo e ntsho e lwa le e khunou.
E ntsho ya e tlhaba mo legwafeng.

The thunder that is rolling overseas,
Is coming from the sea of Egypt:
Molefi has clashed with Mussolini.
Everywhere is the "ratatat-tat" (of guns)
The black bull is fighting the red one,
The black bull has gored the other in the arm pit.

Government overlooked reports from Molefi's military superiors in North Africa that he was drinking heavily, and the new Resident Commissioner, Forsyth Thompson, pronounced him fit to return to bogosi. Officials were counting on Seingwaeng to keep him under control. "Her influence is a strong one", the Acting District Commissioner confidently declared, "and she should have a beneficial effect on Molefi".

Soon after Molefi returned from war to a warm welcome, his banishment order was rescinded. And, in September 1945, he was formally recognized as Kgosi. Before Molefi stood to address the kgotla assembly, several dignitaries spoke to the 5,000 persons gathered for the occasion. First was Mohumagadi Seingwaeng; member of Ipelegeng, leading MoZioni and acknowledged head of the pro-Molefi group throughout the 1930s and early 1940s.

At this moment of victory, Molefi took the stand and performed a dramatic about-face. Molefi was never predictable. In front of Seingwaeng and the many of his followers joyously welcoming him back to power, Molefi declared that, henceforth, the MaZioni would no longer be welcome in the Kgatleng. He was turning his back on the very people who had worked most earnestly for his return. What moved Molefi in this direction is not clear, but his decree signified that the second half of his interrupted reign would be as tumultuous as the first (see chapter 11).

Chapter 6

New Voices before the Second World War

Between the two World Wars several BaTswana emerged as thinkers in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Union of South Africa. They were "new voices", in the sense that they had no authority or power, and no readymade audience. They belonged to a small group of educated Africans. Most of this group found themselves working for the colonial or tribal administrations in one way or another, and remained silent. A few, however, "fell through the cracks". They were men with no appointed or inherited office with which to work their will, no major platform from which to speak and no central role to play in the shaping of events. They stood instead on the edge of things, looking in, and remained unknown to the vast majority of their contemporary BaTswana. By and large, they had only ideas — and a sense of duty — with which to catch the public's attention. These men were important, nevertheless, because they grappled with the problems facing all colonized Africans in this region and sought solutions for the uplifting of others. They were, in many ways, "men ahead of their time". In their lives it is possible to recognize the thinking of future generations of BaTswana and other Southern Africans.

Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje (1878-1932)

"Sol" Plaatje was a MoRolong born in the Boshof District of the Orange Free State. As a boy he attended the Lutheran Mission School at Pniel. From there he went to Kimberley and eventually Mafikeng, where he worked as a clerk and interpreter and became converted to the idea he should be a writer and journalist. Plaatje established the first independent SeTswana and English newspaper, *Koranta ea Becoana,* which came out weekly. He also edited *Tsala ea Batho*, a Kimberley paper owned by a group of Africans. *Koranta* and *Tsala* provided a forum for the expression and formulation of African opinion and a means for conveying their aspirations and grievances to the colonial authorities.

Plaatje's venture into journalism was motivated by his desire to

promote African political interests. He was drawn naturally into political organization, and when the South African Native National Congress (the forerunner of the present ANC) was founded in 1912, Plaatje was its first Secretary. Along with Reverend John Dube (President) and Pixley Seme (Treasurer), Plaatje helped launch the organization that years later would lead the South African liberation struggle. The SANNC was formed to promote African unity and to appeal to the Union for equal rights for Africans.

Plaatje also used his pen to draw the world's attention to the plight of the black man in South Africa. After the Union passed the "Natives' Land Act" in 1913, Plaatje wrote a powerful book, *Native Life in South Africa,* depicting the pain and suffering caused when thousands of Africans were forced off their land. This Act, which legalized the physical removal of blacks from "white areas", put aside a mere 7.3 per cent of all the land for Africans.

Plaatje and other ANC leaders also travelled abroad to present their grievances in person. In 1919 Plaatje, J.T. Gumede, L.T. Mvabaza, R.V. Selope Thema and Rev. H.R. Ngcayiya sailed to London and met David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister. Nothing came of these meetings, but George wrote to Union Prime Minister, Jan Smuts, how deeply impressed he was with the "very considerable oratorical gifts" of the ANC delegation and the "deep sense of injustice" they expressed. From London, Plaatje crossed the Atlantic alone and delivered lectures in Canada and the United States to large gatherings of black Americans. He also met with and made a strong impact on the leading black Americans of that time, including W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. In 1919 Plaatje also sent an impassioned appeal for assistance to Du Bois's Pan African Congress meeting in Paris.

Between this time and Plaatje's death in 1934, his voice in South African politics dwindled. Other men, particularly in the Witwatersrand, were taking over the ANC, and they lacked Plaatje's faith in persuading the Union Government to accept the rights of the black man by peaceful means. As Plaatje became less important politically, he directed his energies into new forms of writing and began to develop his talents as a novelist, linguist and translator. His books include *Dintshontsho tsa bo Julius-Kesare* and *Diphoshophosho,* translations of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Comedy of Errors.* Plaatje wrote *A Sechuana Reader* and *Sechuana Proverbs,* with English translations. He also wrote *Mhudi,* an historical romance based on the times of the mfecane. Plaatje was the first great writer in SeTswana, and his devotion to our language and to the upliftment of all black people deserves to be remembered.

Simon Rathsosa (1883-1939)

Rathosa was the first man in the Protectorate to use nationalist-style writing for the purpose of criticizing colonial rule. He had little impact on people's thinking, because his writings were never published or circulated. His motives for criticizing Government, also, were very personal and had nothing to do with leading public opinion. The ideas of Ratshosa, nevertheless, show that anti-colonial thought emerged in the Bechuanaland Protectorate long before political parties had promoted feelings of nationalism.

Simon Ratshosa was born into BaNgwato royalty. He was the son of Besi, eldest daughter of the first lapa of Khama III. He was one of the first BaTswana to be educated at Lovedale, in the eastern Cape. His father, Ratshosa, was Khama III's personal secretary and kept this famous Kgosi's government correspondence and all private papers. When Ratshosa died, his eldest son and Simon's senior brother, Johnnie Ratshosa, took over his duties and remained the Kgosi's secretary after the death of Khama (in 1923). Johnnie served Sekgoma II until the Kgosi died suddenly in 1925.

When Tshekedi became regent, Johnnie and his brothers were removed from power (see also chapter 3). Tshekedi arrived in Serowe from school to find that a council of twelve had been chosen by the royal uncles to govern until Tshekedi was formally installed. Naturally, the council expected to assist Tshekedi thereafter. The council included Johnnie and Simon. As soon as he formally became regent in 1926, Tshekedi dissolved the council. Tshekedi did so because he distrusted the Ratshosa brothers. Johnnie and Simon, who believed in the worth of the council, felt humiliated. A struggle for power then began.

The conflict burst into the open on Easter Monday in April, 1926. Tshekedi had called Simon, Johnnie and Obeditse Ratshosa to the kgotla to discuss a dispute. It involved Simon's wife, Oratile, who had claimed "ownership" of several "BaSarwa" (San). Simon and his brothers did not obey Tshekedi's call and attended a wedding instead (Simon also was truant from MaTlhogela mophato duties that day). Tshekedi wasted no time dealing with the Ratshosa's disobedience. He had the men rounded up in the afternoon and brought to the kgotla. Tshekedi then sentenced the three men to be thrashed. Johnnie submitted, but Simon and Obeditse fled to their homes. Minutes later they returned, with guns.

Simon and Obeditse took aim at Tshekedi and fired. Several shots

rang out, but Tshekedi was only slightly wounded. Simon and his brother were arrested. In accordance with SeTswana law, their homes were burnt and other property destroyed. Then, in the Magistrate's court, Simon and Obeditse were found guilty of attempted murder and sentenced to ten years hard labour (the Resident Magistrate later reduced it to four years). In 1930, after serving their sentences, the Ratshosa brothers were banished to Francistown.

While in exile, Simon began to write extensively as his thoughts circled round and round his fall from power. It is perhaps natural for those with personal grievances to regard their enemies as great ogres who threaten everyone. Thus, in Simon's mind, Tshekedi became a tyrant, and bogosi and other institutions became Tshekedi's shackles for enslaving the people. Simon poured out his bile in a lengthy manuscript entitled "My Book on Bechuanaland Protectorate Native Custom".

The people of the Protectorate, Simon wrote, suffered under the direct rule of paramount chiefs who were cruel and repulsive. He termed diKgosi the "dusky despots" who contravened the British system of justice by imposing "feudal customs" on the people and enriching themselves in the process. Mephato were part of a system akin to slavery. Simon called it "forced labour". People were called to perform regimental labour while their own property and fields stood unattended. Crops withered from neglect, and cattle scattered or fell prey to wild dogs. Masotla fields, cultivated by the people for the Kgosi, was, he argued, just another form of exploitation.

Simon argued for modifying the powers of the chiefs. In order to curb despotism and promote "native progress and economic freedom", he called for the creation of a "National Council" to serve the whole of the Protectorate. The Council, which would be headed by educated BaTswana (including Simon Ratshosa), would grant representation to all groups and would prevent large groups such as BaNgwato and BaKwena from dominating smaller ones, such as BaKalanga, BaSarwa and BaKgalagadi. The Council would advise the Resident Commissioner on law-making, serve as a court of appeal on all cases originating in dikgotla, and have the power to discipline what Simon called "disobedient chiefs".

The colonial administration also drew Ratshosa's fire. The Magistrates, who sat in major Tswana towns, were guilty of supporting the diKgosi, allowing them to banish people and to employ forced labour. White officials, like the diKgosi, had also created their own "royal" families. Sons, relatives and friends of officials inherited places in the administration, whereas educated

Africans were given no opportunities in the Protectorate service by white officials or by diKgosi.

Ratshosa played a particularly significant role in focusing international attention on the condition of BaSarwa servants (malata). From exile he publicly proclaimed that the BaSarwa were being kept as slaves. This charge was very embarrassing to colonial administrators, who knew that it was well founded. In 1923, for example, a MoSarwa, known to officials as "Charlie", had taken the bold step of appealing to the Government because his MoKgalagadi master (himself a servant to a well-to-do MoKwena), had sold his family from him. Other cases of murder and rape committed against BaSarwa by their masters also reached the ears of Magistrates, though prosecutions were rare. In 1926 the High Commissioner, Earl of Athlone, toured the Protectorate proclaiming his opposition to BaSarwa servitude, but nothing was done to enforce it.

Not until 1932, after Simon had threatened from exile to "astound the whole civilized world" with proof that slavery was practised under the British flag, did officials become afraid of international opinion. In the same year the Government released a report denying that malata were slaves, while at the same time they alleged that the institution was disappearing. The report, however, failed to bury the issue. The trial of some prominent BaNgwato for flogging a MoSarwa to death kept bolata in the headlines. So did the visit of group of liberal, human-rights activists, with whom Simon was in contact. Further reports denying the existence of BaSarwa slavery were published by the LMS in 1935 and by the Government in 1938 (the latter report was sent to the League of Nations), but the issue remained controversial.

In 1939 Simon Ratshosa died in exile at the age of fifty-six, lonely and, except for the BaSarwa issue, unheard. His manuscript on "Native Custom" ended up in an administration file, which gathered dust for another three decades until a young English historian, sitting in the Botswana National Archives, untied the faded red ribbon round its cover. Inside was found the work of Simon Ratshosa, one of Botswana's first nationalists, whose thoughts began to echo in this country not long after his death.

Leetile Raditladi (1910-1971)

Like Simon Ratshosa, Leetile Raditladi was a member of the BaNgwato royal family and, like Simon, spent most of his life

outside Serowe after quarrelling with Tshekedi. Rather than brood in loneliness over his lost influence, however, Leetile looked for ways to utilize his talents. His quest for purposeful work took him all over the Protectorate, and his influence was felt from the 1930s almost up to the time of independence. Leetile became a civil servant, a tribal secretary, a union organizer, a political activist, and a member of Bechuanaland's first LEGCO. This extremely busy man also found time to become Botswana's most prolific SeTswana writer. During the colonial period, Leetile was the first of a breed of educated men and women who created opportunities for themselves outside their own Reserves and sensed where the winds of the future were blowing.

Even as a young man, Leetile was a prominent figure. He was the son of Disang Raditladi, grandson of Raditladi and great-grandson of Sekgoma I and his seventh wife. In other words, Leetile's grandfather was Khama III's brother. Compared to other Africans of his day, Leetile acquired a great deal of education. He matriculated at Lovedale (equivalent to 'O' levels) and later enrolled at the Fort Hare South African Native College (Alice) for a Bachelor of Arts degree. Unfortunately, financial problems cut short his studies. Back in Serowe, Leetile readily stood out as a handsome, dashing, young man.

Leetile also quickly ran afoul of Tshekedi. In 1937 Tshekedi accused Leetile of being the father of the newborn child of Bagakgametse, Tshekedi's wife. Tshekedi alleged that Leetile and Bagakgametse had been lovers when Tshekedi was absent from Serowe. In an inquiry held to determine responsibility, Tshekedi provided no concrete evidence against Leetile, but he proceeded to file a divorce case in the Magistrate's court and call on the Magistrate to banish Leetile. Leetile, who denied the accusations, was convinced that Tshekedi wished to remove him, along with the other Raditladis and the Ratshosas, from the Reserve in order to monopolize control over young Seretse, heir to bogosi. These fears were strengthened when Tshekedi accused Bagakgametse and the three Raditladi brothers (Leetile, Lebang and Disang) of bewitching Tshekedi's mother, Semane, and his sister, Bonyerile. Again, no evidence was brought forward.

In fact, the political conflict between Tshekedi and Leetile began before they were born. In 1894, Khama III quarrelled with Raditladi over the control of the LMS church and banished his brother to Rhodesia. In 1938, Tshekedi did the same thing to Leetile and his two brothers. Tshekedi was convinced his nephews were asserting themselves in an effort to challenge his rule. He banished them from

Serowe and ordered them to settle in Francistown.

Never a man to sit in one place, Leetile was soon on the move. For the next six years he worked as an interpreter for the Protectorate station in Tshabong, then in 1944 he was transferred to Ngamiland to work in the tsetse fly department. Leetile's education and bright mind soon caught the attention of the Regent, Pulane, who invited him to become Secretary for the BaTawana Tribal Administration.

At this point, in the late 1940s, Leetile became increasingly well known in the Protectorate. He represented the BaTawana on the NAC, where he sat, ironically, with Tshekedi who had by then gone into exile in the Kweneng and represented the BaKwena. By then, Leetile was also known to the readers of *Naledi ya Batswana,* the colonial newspaper, edited by Kgosi Lebotse. Leetile wrote popular articles for *Naledi,* using the name "Observer".

In 1952, Leetile began a new phase in his life. Because of the troubles brewing in Ngamiland (see chapter 8), he left Maun and based himself once more in Francistown and soon became involved in trade union organization. He helped revive the Francistown African Employees Union, the first trade union in the Protectorate, founded in 1948 (although it lapsed a year later). By then Leetile was also involved deeply in the BaNgwato Crisis (see chapter 9), and as the 1950s progressed, his thoughts turned towards political parties (see chapter 13).

Throughout his life, however, Leetile maintained an abiding interest in SeTswana literature. And as in Simon Ratshosa's writings, Tshekedi had a profound impact on Leetile's subject matter. His poems, such as "Mothokagae" in *Sefalana sa Menate*, centre around his conflict with Tshekedi, and his historical drama, *Motswasele II*, emphasizes the despotic powers of dikgosi. Leetile was also conscious of social injustice. In his novel *Ditshontsho tsa Lorato,* the main character is Seakoma, a mofaladi whose low status prevents him from marrying a MoNgwato girl. Leetile also followed Sol Plaatje's footsteps in exposing SeTswana readers to Shakespeare. His translation of *Macbeth* is a good example of his command of the two languages and of his preoccupation with the theme of power and its corrupting force.

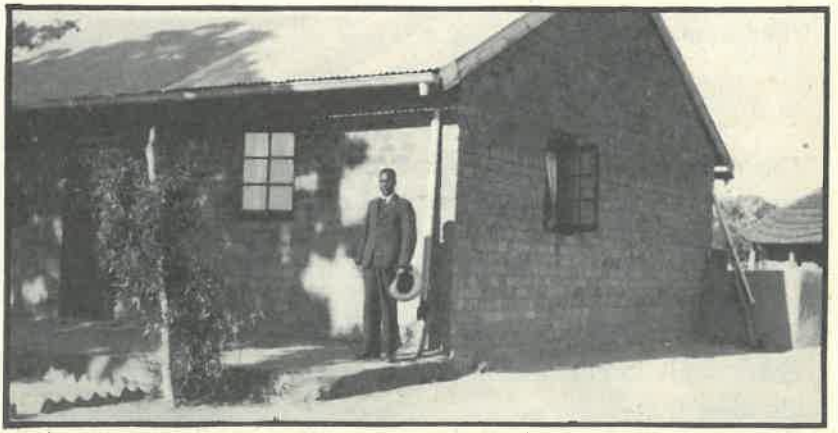
K.T. Motsete (1899-1975)

Kgaleman Tumedisho Motsete was the first MoTswana of non-royal birth to acquire an education and turn it to national advantage. He was born officially as a MoNgwato in Serowe, but he was by origin MoTalaote, whose people were regarded as lowly

bafaladi by the BaNgwato. Motsete was the son of Moruti Tumedisho Maruapule, who resided in Kgosing in Serowe. By being able to attend school there, Motsete's brilliant mind earned him bursaries for further studies, and he went on to become the most educated resident of the Bechuanaland Protectorate of his time. For a while he was a teacher in South Africa, then attended Divinity School in London, where he obtained three bachelor's degrees — in Theology, Music and Arts!

Back in Serowe, Motsete soon learned that his education was regarded as a threat. Like the Ratshosas and Raditladis, Motsete clashed with Tshekedi. Educated men were offended by Tshekedi's use of mephato as forced labour and felt excluded from performing useful tasks in the Kgosi's administration. Their criticisms and frustrations often led them into conflict with Tshekedi, and Motsete was no exception. Motsete had hoped for Tshekedi's blessing to establish a school in Serowe. It was not forthcoming. So in 1931, Motsete left Serowe and joined the staff of the LMS school at Tiger Kloof in Vryburg.

Not long thereafter, Motsete returned to the Protectorate with a singular ambition. He wanted to establish a boarding school for boys so that they would not have to travel to Southern Rhodesia or South Africa to obtain an education. And most of all, he wanted this school to serve the BaKalanga, who though more numerous than any BaTswana group, had almost no educational opportunities above the primary level. These ideas had been planted in Motsete by BaKalanga scholars at Tiger Kloof and had been brought to maturity by appeals to Motsete from several Kalanga boShe to help them establish a school. These boShe included Habangaan, Masunga, Hukwa and Mosojane.



K.T. Mosete in front of the Tati Training Institute

In 1932, Motsete opened his school at Nyewele, near Tshesebe, and called it the Tati Training Institute. The Institute, a purely African venture, was a continuation school for those who had passed standard five and six at the elementary level.

Motsete also thought of education in terms of self-reliance. The Tati Training Institute motto was the IKalanga proverb, "mafuta o kumbila a to liga nudzi" (literally, the fat which is begged for does not make the hair pretty). It referred to pre-colonial times, when Kalanga girls styled their hair with butter-fat in order to hold it in place and make the black appear deep and shiny. To maintain self-respect, a girl was better off scrapping all of the butter-fat from her own calabash than expecting others to give her enough fat for her hair. In other words, education was like the butter-fat; it could be had in sufficient quantities through self-reliance rather than by depending on others. Such education would also improve their own living conditions.

The school included agriculture, for example, as a major subject of instruction. This timetable, found in old records, shows the hours devoted to each subject every week.

Subject	**Hours**
Prayers and scripture	2
Arithmetic	4
English	6
History and Geography	4
Vernacular (Ikalanga)	3
Hygiene and Moral Lessons	1
Singing	1
Agriculture	12
Other subjects	2
Total	**36**

The Tati Training Institute was built with mephato labour. Two regiments were sent by She Nswazwi of the BakaNswazwi to cut timber and put up a large house. Other people contributed cattle and grain. Motsete also received help from outside. In 1935 the Carnegie Corporation of America contributed US $5,000 a year for 5 years to help develop the school. In 1936, therefore, the school had to charge only £5 per student per year, a fee that an average family could afford.

To begin with, the school flourished. The classrooms were full,

and qualified teachers were found for the various subjects. Most came from South Africa.

Tshekedi then attempted to close it. Apparently, Tshekedi viewed educated BaKalanga as a political threat, just as he had put down attempts by John Nswazwi to assert his independence (see chapter 4) and had banished educated men from the Reserve. Tshekedi ordered his representative at "BB-1" near Sebina, Rasebolai Kgamane, to inform all BaKalanga that anyone who was found supporting Motsete's Institute would be driven from "Khama's land".

The school struggled on, in spite of these threats, and gained moral support from diKgosi in the Protectorate. At the 1937 meeting of the NAC, Kgosi Kgari of BaKwena proposed to the Resident Commissioner that the Tati Training Institute be put on the same level as Tiger Kloof and that the sons of diKgosi be allowed to attend this school at government expense. Isang Pilane, representing the BaKgatla, also asked the Government to provide financial support for Motsete's school.

Eventually the Government, encouraged by Tshekedi, allowed the school to fall into debt. No funds were offered to the school, which faced increasing financial problems. In 1938 Motsete moved the school to Francistown in order to be closer to medical facilities, a move opposed by the Tati BaKalanga. From that point, they too ceased supporting Motsete's school. In 1941 the school shut down. The hopes Motsete had of gaining funds from overseas had been shattered by the outbreak of World War II.

Yet, in its brief life, Motsete's school had accomplished quite a lot. By 1939, it had produced 322 graduates, many of whom went on to become teachers in and outside the Protectorate. Others became drivers, storekeepers, policemen, clerks and interpreters. And many of the future political leaders from BuKalanga were caned and taught lessons of a different kind by the legendary "K.T.":

Motsete's career, too, did not end with the closing of the school. He continued to teach and travel and direct his mind to the problems of the people of this country. As chapter 13 reveals, he became the founder of Botswana's first major political party, the Bechuanaland People's Party (BPP). And, before his death in 1975, he composed this country's national anthem, "Fatshe La Rona". The seeds of this song, which points to the right of BaTswana to the ownership of the country and urges unity and commitment to development, were planted along with the beans and maize in the gardens of the Tati Training Institute.

Chapter 7

The Protectorate and World War II

In 1941 people in many parts of the Protectorate resisted attempts by diKgosi and the British to send them abroad and take part in World War II. BaTswana were not cowards and they were not afraid to fight. In the South African War (1899-1902) thousands had served as soldiers, scouts, wagoneers and labourers. During World War I (1914-1918), hundreds had worked and fought for the British in Namibia and Europe. Yet, when war broke out once again, few stepped forward. The diKgosi were willing to back the British and pledged their loyalty, but at the beginning their subjects were unwilling to follow. The British desperately needed African labourers to assist in the battle against the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan. They put pressure on the diKgosi to recruit the men they needed, and, in turn, the diKgosi used force and coercion on their people. As a result, over 10,000 men became part of the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps (the AAPC) and spent the next three years far from home in North Africa, the Middle East and Italy. Those who remained behind also played a supporting role. More men were needed in the mines across the border, and women, children and the elderly were expected to raise extra food. World War II was a difficult time for everyone. Afterwards, people thought much differently about the meaning of being part of the British Empire.

In days gone by, some truth was contained in the word, "Protection", and BaTswana cooperated with the British in defending colonial rule. When the South African War broke out in 1899, BaNgwato, BaRolong and BaKgatla soldiers fought with British troops against the Boers and, together with other groups, aided them in many other ways. During World War I, at least 555 BaTswana voluntarily enlisted in the ten thousand-strong contingent of Africans from Southern Africa. This group, which provided labour service in Europe, included Sebele Sechele (later Sebele II), senior members of the BaKgatla royal family, and many commoners. Among these were 203 BaNgwaketse, 127 BaKgatla, 74 BaKwena, 49 BaLete, 32 BaTlokwa and 70 men from the Tati.

Later the BaKgatla supplied 312 men and the BaLete 93 for the war in Namibia (then German South West Africa). Only Khama refused to supply troops, because he had recently quarrelled with the Government when they closed down his trading stores. He pledged money instead. The BaNgwato, joined by the BaTawana, BaNgwaketse and BaKgatla, contributed nearly £2,000 to the War Fund.

In 1939, when World War II began, most diKgosi were once again prepared to support the Crown. In September, Resident Commissioner Arden-Clarke announced that Britain had declared war on Germany. He also asked his District Commissioners to obtain from diKgosi and their subjects "guarantees of loyalty" to the British Government. Such requests were routine procedure all over the Empire, where subject peoples had no real say in how things were run. In those parts of the Protectorate where diKgosi did run things, however, the response was positive and quick. All the principal diKgosi wrote to Arden-Clark expressing loyalty and pledging their unconditional support. Kgosi Kgari Sechele went futher. He asked the Resident Commissioner to convey his pledge to the King of England and report that the BaKwena were ready to help in the great struggle. Kgari ended: "May God help you overcome your enemies — Pula! Pula! Pula!". Tshekedi, claiming to write on behalf of the BaNgwato, sent a similar message. The BaNgwato had nothing to offer except themselves, he stated, and they were placing themselves entirely at the disposal of "His Majesty, the King".

At that point, the British had no plans to send men from the Protectorate overseas. At a meeting convened soon after the declaration, Arden-Clarke informed the diKgosi about the war and told them what the administration expected them to do. For the time being, he explained, no BaTswana would be recruited. Instead, the diKgosi should urge their people to grow a lot of food and become self-sufficient. While engaged in war, Britain could not assist the Protectorate with grants. DiKgosi would also maintain law and order in their respective districts so that the police could spend all their time guarding the rail and telegraph lines, which were liable to attack or sabotage from right-wing, pro-Nazi Afrikaners in South Africa working for the Germans. Fifteen months then passed quietly.

In December 1940 the diKgosi, led by Tshekedi, insisted that the Protectorate people become involved in the war. They proposed that a "Bechuanaland Protectorate Military Labour Corps" be formed for service under the British. The diKgosi and their people

would meet the costs. Behind this offer was the hope that, if the Protectorate were allowed to play its role during the war, the British Parliament would be less likely afterwards to agree to incorporate a truly loyal Protectorate into South Africa. Arden-Clarke turned down the offer and suggested that BaTswana interested in joining the war should enlist with the African units of the South African Union Defence Force (SAUDF). The diKgosi said no. They knew that any sacrifices made by BaTswana while members of South African units would not be credited to the Protectorate. They were also aware of the bad memories of World War I veterans, who while serving alongside Boer troops in Europe became victims of racial violence. Some returned to the Protectorate so embittered by their experience that they refused to accept war medals offered by the British.

Within a few months after rejecting the diKgosi's offer, the British changed their mind. The British army was suddenly faced with an urgent need for labour units at different battle fronts in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The war planners thought that the extremely cold weather in those areas could be endured only by colonial subjects used to similar winter conditions. In the British Empire, only Africans from Southern Africa met this requirement. For this reason, the British decided to raise troops from Swaziland, Basutoland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. And to do the recruiting, they turned to the diKgosi.

The diKgosi were willing on certain conditions. Troops would be formed in Bechuanaland units and not part of the SAUDF. Also they would be trained in the Protectorate at a camp established for that very purpose, before being sent off to the various battle fronts. The British agreed. A camp was set up at Lobatse, and quotas were assigned as follows: the BaNgwato were to produce seven companies of 365 volunteers each; the BaKwena and BaNgwaketse each to provide three companies and the BaKgatla and BaTawana, one company each. Between them the BaTlokwa and BaLete were to form one company. Together the sixteen companies from the Protectorate would become part of the "African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps", which also contained volunteers from the other two High Commission territories.

The diKgosi found recruiting very difficult. Normally men were summoned to the kgotla and asked to volunteer, but very few men in any morafe answered these initial calls. Many people ran away to the mines and farms in South Africa or into the bush or desert in order to avoid recruitment into the AAPC. Some old men are also reported to have crossed into South Africa claiming that they were

students returning to school! Even Tshekedi, an enthusiastic supporter of the war effort, faced open resistance from his people, particularly the BaKalanga and the BaSarwa and other people living in Boteti. Kgosi Ketswerebothata of the BaLete was against voluntary recruitment, and most diKgosi felt they needed more authority in order to force people to go to war. The British, however, wanted recruitment to appear voluntary. They, therefore, attempted an indirect form of coercion by imposing a temporary ban on mine labour contracts until the required number of men for AAPC had been reached.

Still, able-bodied men became harder to find. When mephato were ordered to present themselves for recruitment, absenteeism was high. In GaNgwaketse, Kgosi Bathoen ordered the 158 members of MaLetamotse to appear in kgotla for "attestation", but only five turned up. Not until absentees were rounded up and some flogged at the kgotla did 132 come forward as "volunteers". In Tlokweng, four mephato with a total of 238 able-bodied men were present in town in August 1941, but when Kgosi Matlala summoned them to kgotla, only twenty-four turned up. In Ramotswa, when Ketshwerebothata circulated the order that the 448 men of four mephato appear for attestation, most slipped out of town. On the appointed day, only sixty-eight attended the meeting.

In spite of the great difficulties, diKgosi found the means of meeting their quotas. By the end of 1941, over 5,000 men had been recruited and sent to Lobatse for training before being shipped off to war. In July 1942, yet another call for recruits was made, and diKgosi once more proved equal to the task. During World War II, altogether 10,027 men from the Protectorate (about twenty per cent of the adult male population) were recruited into the AAPC. No other colony in Africa sent a higher percentage of men. These large numbers were the direct result of coercion used by diKgosi and the willingness of the British to turn a blind eye to such practices.

A typical example of the methods used took place at Gabane in the eastern Kweneng. Kgosi Kgari sent his representatives there to recruit for the AAPC, and the BaLete of Gabane assaulted the visitors. The Native Tribunal in Molepolole then found four Gabane headmen guilty of failing to control their people and ordered them to resettle in Molepolole "under the eye of the chief". Then groups of Bakwena, armed with loaded guns, began forcing Gabane men to join the AAPC. In the meantime, the Gabane people appealed to Government headquarters in Mafikeng. The Government Secretary, Gerald Nettelton, knew that it was illegal to prosecute anyone in court for refusing to join the AAPC, but he

allowed the Molepolole Tribunal to have its way, saying the Gabane headmen could be found guilty under customery law for "disobeying the chief's orders". Then, the police got involved. They regarded the BaKwena action as one of "public violence and disturbance of public peace and security" and informed Mafikeng that the Gabane people had committed no offence. Government then dropped the case and let off the Gabane headmen "with a stern warning". The men forcibly recruited, however, remained in the AAPC.

In addition to the ten thousand men who entered the AAPC, others such as Philip Matante were recruited into the South African Defence Force, while many others fled the country into South Africa. By the end of 1943, at least 21,200 men, mostly between 18 and 50 years, were out of the country. Fugitives in South Africa wrote stinging remarks in a radical South African newspaper about the inhuman methods being used by diKgosi to force people into fighting a foreign war. The newspaper, *Inkululeko,* published an anonymous article accusing the diKgosi of collaborating with the colonial government, even though the country faced grave economic problems:

> People are being arrested in the veld, leaving only old men to plough who collapse at the plough. People plough for the Government and chiefs. Cattle sell at 6d. per head and tax is £4:11. This policy of Bechuanaland is very severe.

Inkululeko was pointing out that the result of forced recruitment was that the majority of people left behind for raising crops and tending stock were old men, women and young children. Most families carried a heavy burden without men to do the ploughing. The war came, too, during years of poor and late rains.

Worst of all, the colonial administration demanded that people inside the Protectorate grow crops in the diKgosi's masotla (designated by Government as "war lands") at the expense of producing for family needs. In the past, grain from masotla was used by diKgosi to feed the poor and destitute or those attending official ceremonies at the kgotla. In 1942, the Government put pressure on people to work in masotla as a disguise for producing grain in support of the war effort. The "war lands" scheme required much more labour than traditional masotla and put 2,400 acres into production. Those called upon to work understood the purpose of the scheme and did their best to see that it failed. People planted and weeded carelessly and let birds eat their fill. The BaTlokwa, BaLete and the people of Mahalapye refused entirely to cultivate the war

lands, preferring instead to pay cash or grain harvested from their own fields.

The result of resistance to the war land scheme and the decline of labour spent in family lands was catastrophic. In the Protectorate, total food production fell drastically. During 1942 and 1943 Government imported 78,565 bags of maize from South Africa to make up for the shortfall. Until 1947 large quantities of grain had to be brought into the Protectorate.

Although cash arrived from men serving in the AAPC or working in South Africa, it was not enough to relieve the burdens carried by those left in the Protectorate. New taxes, such as the "War Levy" and the "Cattle Levy", were introduced. Together with the "Personal Tax" they combined to make the economic situation very difficult. Traders were tempted to take advantage of the war situation and overcharge for essential commodities. Some made as much as 600 per cent profit on such common items as matches. Food shortages during and after the war made bread a popular staple, which was either bought from shops or baked from flour purchased in sacks.

While people suffered at home, members of the AAPC faced their own ordeal. The "Pioneers" served mainly in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy. For the most part, they worked in labour units, though they eventually filled combat roles, such as anti-aircraft gunners and smokescreen makers, in Sicily and during the invasion of Italy. In the bitter, sometimes damp and muddy cold, they built roads, erected bridges, trucked supplies, and served on night patrols. Naturally, all missed their homes and families, but they suffered too from racial discrimination practised by some of the white units. When Tshekedi visited one BaNgwato company, they complained bitterly that their fellow black soldier's body had been exhumed from a white graveyard and buried elsewhere. They were expected to fight alongside white soldiers, yet when they died they could not be buried next to each other.

The soldiers had pleasant experiences, too. For a time, they were isolated and kept in "tribal" companies. But as they entered into combatant roles, these companies were broken up and men were assigned to do specific individual tasks. Soon, they came into contact with soldiers from all over the globe. They met and mixed with other Africans, Afro-Americans, white Americans, Europeans, Canadians, Australians and white subjects of the British empire, all part of the Allied forces. The Pioneers also had the chance of befriending ordinary white European civilians, including women. For many men, the war had a way of removing

AAPC troops in Lebanon

racial barriers. Racial incidents like the one above did occur, but as one old veteran said, "Blacks could mix with whites as if these were black and vice versa. Even the Boers were different people at war".

During the war, many Pioneers acquired skills that could be used upon return to civilian life. Men learned principles of mechanics, driving, telegraphy, carpentry, masonry, pipe laying and bridge construction. Others also learned how to read and write. In 1943, Educational Sergeants began holding classes in each company, and in the process a core of men acquired a taste for writing letters and reading newspapers. The war gave rise to the first long-term SeTswana newspaper serving the Protectorate: *Indlovo/Tlou,* on which the first generation of BaTswana journalists cut its teeth (In 1944 *Indlovo/Tlou* was replaced by *Naledi ya Batswana).*

World War II made its mark on all men, the Pioneers included. Men in the AAPC shared experiences with other colonized people, and it had a great impact on their political attitudes. Afro-Americans and sympathetic whites also impressed BaTswana and encourged them to think more about uniting themselves. After the war, in other parts of the European colonial empires, returning soldiers took part in the development of nationalism and the movement towards independence. As the following chapters will show, World War II veterans in the Protectorate were no exception.

	Deaths
17	Killed in action or died of wounds
28	Accidentally killed
80	Died from Tuberculosis
10	Died from Chest Ailments
75	Died from other Medical causes
210	**Total**
	Other Casualties
77	Wounded
560	Disabled
637	**Total**
	Total Casualties
210	Killed or died from other causes
637	Wounded or disabled
847	**Total**

SECTION III

The growth of regional politics after World War II

The combination of returning servicemen, continued increases in migrant labour and the highly-charged political climate in South Africa in the 1940s and 1950s changed the outlook of many people in the Protectorate. From the late 1940s younger, educated new men including ex-servicemen and ex-labourers became increasingly active in regional affairs and swelled the major political undercurrents before nationalist politics came to the surface.

Chapter 8

The North-West

After World War II, Ngamiland was the scene of separatist protest and a struggle for political rights. It was not, however, simply a conflict between the BaTawana and the British. One hundred years before, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the BaTawana had conquered the peoples of Ngamiland and turned them into subjects of a strong BaTawana state. By the 1930s and 1940s, the BaTawana state was no longer strong. The BaTawana had become dependent on British "protection". The subject peoples, especially the BaYei and OvaHerero, wanted to separate from the BaTawana and rule themselves. In the years leading up to 1966, political life in Ngamiland was dominated by these separatist movements and by the efforts of the BaTawana and the British to suppress them.

These efforts were handicapped by divisions among the BaTawana and between them and the British. After the untimely death of Moremi III in 1946, the authority of Motshwareledi Pulane (Pulane was Moremi's widow) was continually challenged by a group of powerful royals and commoner councillors. These conservatives, who wanted to maintain the status and power of the BaTawana in Ngamiland, opposed making concessions to the subject peoples. The British, on the other hand, favoured reform as the only way to keep the people of Ngamiland together. Caught

between these two opposing views, the Regent shifted between reform and repression in her dealings with the separatists.

In the late 1950s, the separatists were confronted also by the nationalist political ideas popularized by Motsamai Mpho. Once a leading figure in the BaYei protests himself, Mpho became one of the founders of the Bechuanaland People's Party in 1960 (see chapter 13). By then Mpho was campaigning, not only for the rights of BaYei, but for the rights of BaTswana as a whole. He attempted to persuade the BaYei and indeed all of the peoples of the Protectorate to abandon "tribalism" and embrace instead the values of nationalism. Ironically, after independence BaYei separatism continued to thrive while Mpho's party faded away.

To a large extent, the political changes outlined above were rooted in the social and economic nature of the Ngamiland region.

Peoples of Ngamiland, 1946

Group	Population
BaYei	13261
BaTawana	7543
OvaHerero	5798
HaMbukushu	5286
San	3703
BaKgalagadi	1918

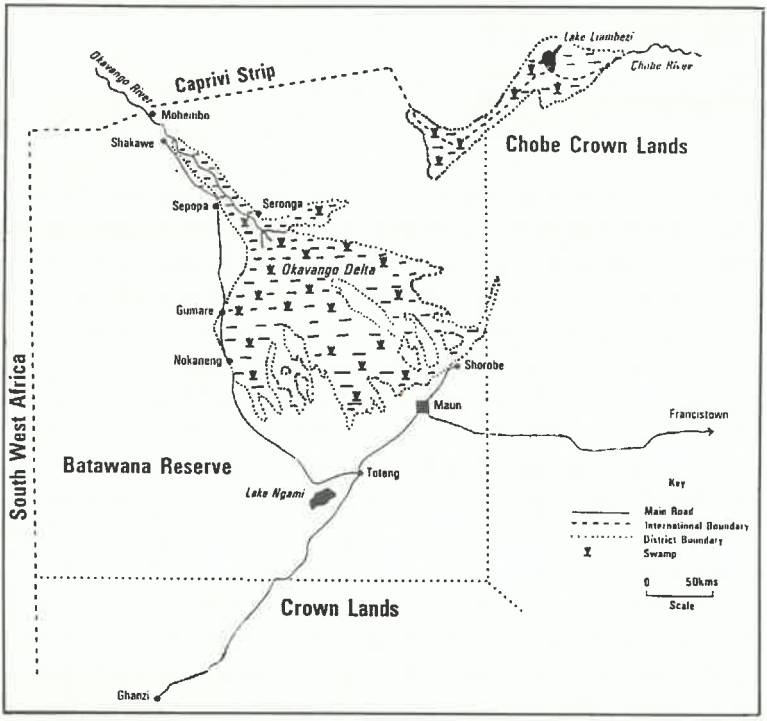
By far the largest group in post-war Ngamiland was the BaYei. Living mainly within the Okavango Delta and on its edges, they had migrated from present-day southern Zambia no later than the eighteenth century. Originally fishermen and agriculturists, they had become stock-keepers as well by the twentieth century. They lived in scattered homesteads, not grouped together in towns like BaTawana, and had no tradition of bogosi. Without a centralized political organization, they were unable to resist the smaller, but militarily stronger, BaTawana state-builders.

The BaTawana arrived in Ngamiland in the early nineteenth century after their first Kgosi, Tawana, had separated from the Ngwato state. Under Kgosi Letsholathebe I (1847-1874), they incorporated the rest of the inhabitants of Ngamiland into a state which was based on a combination of military might, cattle-keeping, and commerce with European traders in ivory and other game trophies. The BaTawana introduced a system of botlhanka in order to subordinate the BaYei. Many BaYei were deprived of such

basic personal freedoms as the right to defend themselves in the kgotla and to inherit property. The BaTawana lived mainly at or near their capital, which was moved from time to time and in 1910 became fixed at Maun.

The next largest group after the BaYei and BaTawana was the semi-nomadic, pastoralist OvaHerero. They migrated into western Ngamiland between 1897 and 1906 while escaping the extensive bloodletting in German-ruled South West Africa (Namibia). The refugees were treated very well by Kgosi Sekgoma Letsholathebe (1891-1906), who ignored the demands of his dikgosana to turn them into batlhanka like the BaYei. They were allowed to have their own headman and to enjoy a substantial degree of autonomy.

The HaMbukushu lived mainly in small villages in the areas between the Mohembo and Seronga districts. Both in origin and occupation, they were similar to the BaYei, but their experience of BaTawana overrule was not nearly as oppressive. One explanation offered for this good fortune is that the BaTawana respected the HaMbukushu rainmakers. The great distance separating the HaMbukushu from the Tawana capital must also have made tighter



Map 5 The North-West

rule over them impractical. Whatever the reason, little friction between the two groups occured, and political and cultural integration was fairly common.

The other two major groups living in Ngamiland, the BaKgalagadi and the San, lived south and west of the Okavango in the Kgalagadi. They suffered less than the BaYei under the BaTawana, partly because they lived, like the HaMbukushu, far from the capital. The BaKgalagadi were also ascribed a higher status than the BaYei or the San. They became clients of BaTawana cattle owners, herding their livestock, but did not become batlhanka or personal servants.

The economy of Ngamiland

The peoples of Ngamiland engaged in a wide variety of economic activities and worked free of the fear of inadequate rains. The Okavango Delta, with its permanent surface water and bountiful swamps and rivers, permitted the cultivation of crops even in drought years and was a paradise for fishermen. The other major geographical region, the Kgalagadi sand veld, supported more cattle (over 100,000 in 1936) than any other Reserve except that of the BaNgwato.

In the late nineteenth century it would have been easy to identify each group by their principal occupation: the BaYei were fishermen and cultivators, for example, and the BaTawana were stock-keepers and traders. Between 1900 and 1940, however, stock-keeping became common among all major groups in Ngamiland. The rinderpest epidemic of the late 1890s temporarily eradicated the tsetse fly along with the cattle, and thereafter cattle could be raised within the Delta. The BaYei benefitted greatly from this opportunity to acquire a new source of wealth. Cattle ownership in general was no longer confined to the BaTawana; outside the Delta, the OvaHerero built up cattle herds which rivalled those of the BaTawana in size and exceeded them in quality. By the 1940s, however, the tsetse fly had returned. Inside the Delta, herding conditions deteriorated. The BaYei had to move their cattle away from the Delta proper and increasingly came into conflict with the BaTawana, who traditionally herded their cattle on the Delta margins.

As the tsetse fly gradually deprived the BaYei of their herds, BaYei men turned to migrant labour as a way of recovering their losses. In 1937 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Authority (WNLA — often referred to as "Wenela") was granted a licence to

recruit labourers from Ngamiland to work in the South African gold mines. A road was built from Shakawe to Maun to transport young men from in and around the Okavango to Francistown, from which they were flown to the Witwatersrand (after 1945, airstrips were built in Ngamiland to fly the miners direct). The Government attempted to siphon off some of the labourers' earnings by introducing new methods of tax collection. The BaYei, for example, were encouraged to abandon their traditional scattered homesteads and settle in new, Tswana-type villages. For a time the BaYei refused to move to the new sites. Gradually, however, the BaYei were concentrated in large villages, such as Nokaneng and Gumare, situated along the Maun-Shakawe road.

After World War I, Ngamiland experienced rapid economic and social change. The predominant position of the BaTawana in the economy of Ngamiland was increasingly challenged by the subject peoples; it was only a matter of time until this challenge assumed a political form and threatened BaTawana supremacy.

The emergence of separatist politics, 1946-1954

Two petitions marked the emergence of separatism in Ngamiland in the post-war era. The first, submitted in 1946, was signed by a section of the OvaHerero. The petitioners requested permission from the Protectorate and South African governments to break away from the BaTawana and return to Namibia. The petition was a response to a declaration made in Pretoria the same year that South Africa planned to incorporate Namibia into the Union. The OvaHerero, who opposed incorporation, hoped their return would enable them to take part in the forthcoming referendum in Namibia on this issue and swing the vote against unification. Their petition was backed by Tshekedi Khama and was looked on favourably by the British, but the Union rejected it on the grounds that Namibia lacked sufficient land to absorb the Protectorate OvaHerero.

The petition nevertheless marks the beginning of an OvaHerero campaign to rid themselves of BaTawana control. Though relatively free over the years, the OvaHerero had been in constant friction with the BaTawana, usually over cattle. And in the 1940s and 1950s, when the tsetse fly reduced the amount of land suitable for grazing, competition for grass and water increased between the two groups. Many OvaHerero began to look with envy at BaTawana-controlled pastures as well as at the empty range across the border in Namibia. Year by year, their frustration grew.

The BaYei were the authors of the second petition voicing

separatist sentiments in the 1940s. In 1948 four demands were sent to the District Commissioner: the BaYei wanted their own dikgotla rather than remain under BaTawana dikgotla; they asked for a voice in tribal administration at every level; they demanded the right to use land without having to pay rent or provide free labour to BaTawana; and they wanted their rights of inheritance secured. The petition was, in short, an attack on botlhanka and a claim for cultural identity.

The petition was authored by four educated BaYei and had been devised in consultation with BaYei headmen. Like the OvaHerero petition, it was partly a reaction to the intense competition for land and resources; but it also reflected a revival of BaYei identity. Unlike the OvaHerero, who had remained aloof from the BaTawana, the BaYei faced the possibility of being overwhelmed by SeTswana culture. Already a large number of BaYei, perhaps even the majority, wanted to be regarded as BaTawana. They spoke only SeTswana and expressed no wish to rule themselves.

The British advised the Regent, Pulane, to make concessions to the BaYei. She reluctantly granted them their dikgotla but refused the other demands, denying that botlhanka existed. For the time being the BaYei separatist leadership had to be content with the lone concession. They realized that their petition lacked massive support and that they had no way of retaliating against Pulane's lukewarm response. Five new dikgotla were created for the BaYei — at Maun, Nokaneng, Seropa, Seronga and Shorobe — but most BaYei ignored them, preferring instead to use the dikgotla of the BaTawana Chief's Representative.

The absence of popular support did not discourage the BaYei "separatists", as they were labelled by the British. They decided to employ tactics that would exploit the divisions existing among the BaTawana themselves. The Regent was very unpopular. She found it necessary to rely on the support of BaYei and other subject peoples against a group of powerful, wealthy BaTawana conservatives. In 1951 the Regent considered making a MoYei their Chief's Representative instead of a MoTawana, mainly to spite her political enemies. Pulane changed her mind, however, when the separatists demanded this reform as a right rather than as a privilege.

The BaYei were quite prepared to play each side against the other in this complex political triangle. They made contact with the Regent's enemies and from them they came up with the idea of hiring a lawyer to fight their case. They chose a Bulawayo solicitor, Mr Raphaely, to argue before Protectorate authorities that the

BaYei were legally entitled to have their institution of chieftainship "restored". In fact the BaYei did not have a tradition of chieftainship in the Tawana sense; there had never been one central authority. But if the separatists could convince the British that they should recognize such a legal authority, it would be possible to set up a tribal administration of their own, on Tswana lines, and run it independently of the BaTawana.

Raphaely bombarded the Protectorate administration with letters, even though he knew very little of the history and character of the BaYei-BaTawana dispute, and his repeated demands made the British less, rather than more, sympathetic to the problems of the BaYei. Much more effective was a passionate plea for independence made by an educated MoYei school teacher, who compared the plight of the BaYei to the Israelites under the Egyptians and the Celts (ancestors to the British) under the Romans. Several Government officials regarded this plea as the shape of BaYei opinion to come. They urged the Resident Commissioner to make more concessions, arguing that otherwise the desire for separation might gain majority support.

Anthony Sillery, the Resident Commissioner, was unwilling to make such concessions. The system of local government, he noted, was going to be reformed throughout the Protectorate in the next few years. The BaYei would have to wait for these reforms. Sillery promised the BaYei that the new system would introduce "real democracy" into Ngamiland. Elected councils would replace BaTawana autocracy, so they were told. These promises were made in 1950. Yet, not until 1961 was the council system introduced. For the BaYei, as with the OvaHerero, the 1950s was a decade of interminable waiting and disillusionment.

BaTawana politics

The growth of separatist politics in Ngamiland was helped by the split in BaTawana politics, between the Regent and a powerful faction of BaTawana royals and commoner councillors. At one level, the source of this division may be seen as a reaction against an unpopular Regent. A Regent's role was always difficult and never secure, but Pulane Moremi suffered under two "handicaps" which made this job even more of a challenge: Pulane was a woman, and by birth she was an outsider — a MoRolong from South Africa. Yet other and more important reasons, which reach far back in time, account for the strength of opposition to Pulane's rule.

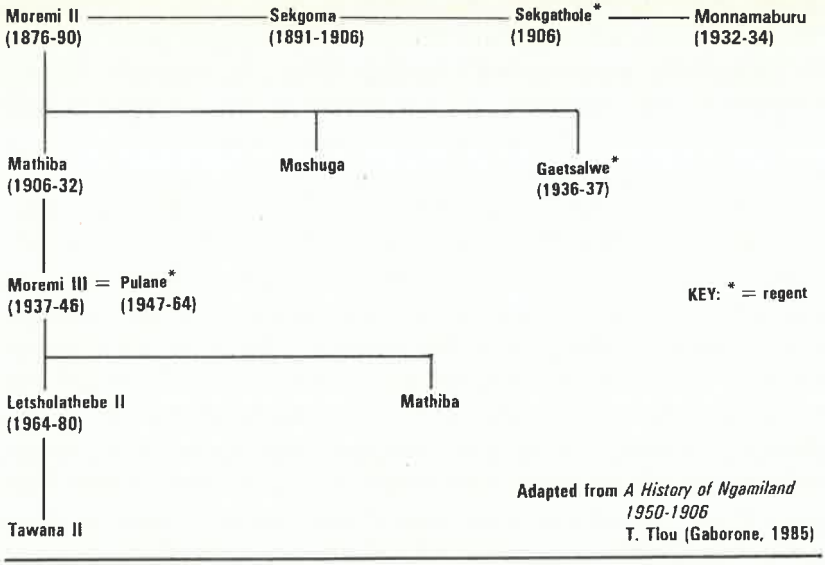
The last great independent Kgosi of the BaTawana had been Sekgoma Letsholathebe. He had been deposed by the British in 1906 with the active cooperation of most of the royals. Sekgoma's support came mainly from the subject peoples, namely the BaYei and OvaHerero, who regarded Sekgoma as their protector against the oppression and extortion practised by the majority of the BaTawana. Unfortunately for the subject people, Sekgoma was succeeded by weak diKgosi and Batshwareledi, and the royals and the councillors became used to having their own way.

Pulane's late husband, Kgosi Moremi III, who ruled for only nine years, had provided limited protection for the BaYei and had promised to make reforms. Moremi ruled too briefly and lacked the resolve to challenge the power of the men around the throne, most of whom were also the big kgamelo holders of the royal cattle. When Moremi's widow became Regent, they hoped to control her actions to safeguard these cattle, which she, and in the future her son, could call on at any time. They also wanted her to repress the ambitions of the BaYei and OvaHerero, whose cattle herds were competing with their own for scarce resources, and whose notions of equality were an insult to BaTawana traditional dominance in Ngamiland.

Pulane Moremi proved to have a mind and will of her own. In partnership with another foreigner, her MoNgwato Tribal Secretary, Leetile Raditladi, she quickly gained the reputation as a progressive, able administrator who was determined to fight corruption and injustice. The concessions she made to the BaYei in 1948 symbolized her independent stand. The BaTawana traditional elite soon afterwards launched their own campaign to remove Pulane from the regency. They began by attacking Raditladi, accusing him of having an evil and undue influence over the Regent, and implying that he planned to marry her and make himself Kgosi. Despite her efforts to defend Raditladi, Pulane finally submitted to majority opinion and dismissed her Secretary.

The Regent then took her revenge. She dismissed her Deputy Regent, Moshuga, a prominent royal and leader of the "malcontents". In retaliation, they sent to the District Commissioner a petition signed by fifty-eight leading BaTawana demanding an enquiry to be held into the Regent's conduct. They hoped the British would depose Pulane and thus allow them, as they had done after 1906, to regain their hold. The British, however, had a high opinion of the Regent and took her side against the "malcontents". In an informal inquiry held in kgotla during December 1951, the British confirmed her authority.

TAWANA ROYAL GENEALOGY



In desperation, Moshuga's group looked for allies elsewhere in the Protectorate. A delegation, led by Moshuga and Mma Moremi III, visited Serowe and Molepolole, but they received no encouragement from the BaNgwato or the BaKwena. Moshuga then went to Zeerust and engaged a lawyer named Coulson. On his return to Maun, Moshuga and fifty other BaTawana held a meeting at Moremi's grave in an open act of defiance of the Regent's authority. Again the British defended Pulane's position. They arrested Moshuga and fined him heavily. He and his supporters were summoned to Mafikeng and told that further rebellion would not be tolerated. If they continued to defy the Regent, prison would await them all.

Until 1964, when Letsholathebe II became Kgosi, the "malcontents" found ways of opposing Regent Pulane. They became a sort of pressure group, urging both the Regent and the British to give nothing away to the subject peoples and to make as few changes as possible. Their influence helps to explain why reform came so late to Ngamiland.

Nationalism and separatist politics, 1954-1967

Between 1954 and 1961 while the BaYei waited for Government to implement the local government reforms, a new voice of BaYei

protest was heard. Motsamai Mpho had left Ngamiland in 1948 for South Africa where he became an organizer for the African National Congress. In 1954 he also became an important advocate of BaYei separatism, lobbying a British Labour Party MP, Fenner Brockway, to exert pressure on the British Government. Mpho quickly became a thorn in the side of the Protectorate administration; his letters, and those of Brockway, caused them more trouble than the BaYei's Bulawayo lawyer. Time and again the Protectorate administration had to justify and explain their actions, or rather inaction, in Ngamiland. And in every case they were forced to make the promise of reform.

When reforms did come, in early 1961, neither Mpho nor the BaYei leaders were satisfied. Since 1954 political developments in the Protectorate had raised their expectations and widened their horizons. The British had agreed to set up a Legislative Council for the Protectorate as a whole. It seemed possible that in the not-too-distant future they would grant independence, as well. For Mpho, who had been deported from South Africa in 1960 for his ANC activities, these developments promised an opportunity to preach nationalism in the Protectorate and campaign for independence.

Soon after arriving back in the territory, Mpho helped found the Bechuanaland People's Party (see chapter 13). The BPP pressed for a rapid transition to independence for the Protectorate — much more rapid than the British were willing to contemplate. No longer content with BaYei autonomy, Mpho wanted national independence for the Protectorate. He advised the BaYei to refuse to have anything to do with the new councils and to ignore the authority of the Regent. In effect he advocated a policy of non-cooperation.

The BaYei followed Mpho's advice, though their reasons for doing so had little to do with nationalism. The separatists remained unwilling to participate in the new councils, because the councils would be dominated by the BaTawana. They wanted their own tribal administration, and they wanted it before they became part of an independent BaTswana state. As local council elections approached, the BaYei in Maun began to defy the authority of the Regent. BaYei women refused to do regimental work, and the men ignored Pulane's orders to attend the kgotla. When the elections did take place, and even though BaYei were well represented on the new councils, the policy of non-cooperation continued, ending only after twenty-eight men were arrested and fined.

Mpho then tried to disassociate himself from the BaYei separatists. Their cause had become a political liability, tainted with

Pulane with her secretary Tsheko Tsheko in Kgotla, 1963

"tribalism". In Mpho's words, the BaYei had to be taught that "tribal divisions are unhealthy. .... Bechuanaland needs one united Batswana nation irrespective of their races or creed(s)". To distance himself from the separatists, Mpho took up permanent residence in GammaNgwato and based himself at Palapye. As it turned out, Mpho failed to make the transition from MoYei separatist to Botswana nationalist. In the early 1960s divisions among BPP leaders led Mpho to form another party, the Botswana Independence Party, but the BIP managed to gain a significant following only in Ngamiland and mainly from the BaYei.

With or without Mpho, the BaYei continued their separatist struggle up to and after independence. In 1967, they employed another lawyer to present their request, this time to the Botswana Government, for recognition as a separate "tribe". The lawyer argued that "the Botswana constitution is there to free them from the slavery and tutelage of the past". Though separatist feeling has declined since independence, it has not disappeared.

OvaHerero separatist politics

As independence approached, a large group of OvaHerero also became more determined to retain their separate identity and to return to Namibia from their exile in Ngamiland. Like the BaYei, they would have nothing to do with the local government reforms. In 1957, eleven years after their first petition requesting permission to return to Namibia, a second was drafted. The BaTawana were willing to see them go and thereby release more grazing land for their own cattle. South Africa, however, again refused permission.

The leader of the OvaHerero separatists was a headman named Phakalane Keharango. As with the BaYei, many OvaHerero were content with BaTawana rule and did not recognize Phakalane as their "chief". In the early 1960s, Phakalane came into conflict with the BaTawana and the British. When officials attempted to remove Phakalane, however, his followers mounted a campaign of non-cooperation very similar to the one carried on by the BaYei. Ultimately, the campaign failed. Before independence came, Phakalane was banished to Namibia, but the disappointment of his people in not being allowed to follow him posed a major problem for the Botswana Government.

Separatism and nationalism

The BaYei and OvaHerero struggles for autonomy are only one strand of history in post-war Ngamiland. Yet, their efforts and those who responded say much about the region and the time as a whole. Separatism in the Northwest bears marked similarity to the struggle for independence in other regions and in the emerging Republic of Botswana.

In essence, the struggle was about what form of government should take the place of BaTawana rule. Until the 1930s the British had maintained and supported BaTawana rule as part of their colonial system. They then started to dismantle it, in order to create a more efficient structure, raise greater revenues, and channel more labour to the South African mines. To gain cooperation, the British offered piecemeal reforms, failing to see that they were cultivating instead the seedbed of separatism and nationalism in Ngamiland and other parts of the Protectorate. When the BaYei were granted dikgotla in 1948, their interest in separatism was increased. Representation on local councils failed to satisfy their aspirations. Even today, voting in local and general elections is still considered by many to be a way of registering separatist discontent.

BaYei and OvaHerero separatism, like nationalism throughout the Protectorate, were not popular movements in their early days. Only a minority of each group gave their support. The leaders were a mixture of educated, younger men and the traditional elite. Educated leaders provided the means of coordinating action and of communicating their objectives to Government. The traditional leaders mobilized support among the people, and their influence continues to be of great importance. Separatism, then, has survived the attempts of the BaTawana, the British, and some would argue the Botswana Government itself, to mould it to their design.

Chapter 9

The Central District: The BaNgwato Crisis, 1948- 1956

During 1949 and 1950 the Bamangwato Reserve (today's Central District) became known around the world because Seretse Khama was deposed from the BaNgwato bogosi and exiled to Britain. Journalists and photographers from Europe and America came to Serowe to report this story, and newspapers and magazines everywhere were full of pictures and reports of the Seretse drama. African students in Europe and West Africa demonstrated in support of Seretse, while at home the BaNgwato refused to accept any other Kgosi.

The BaNgwato Crisis lasted from 1948 until 1956, when Seretse Khama was allowed to return home and live as an ordinary person but not as Kgosi. The crisis affected the entire Protectorate and influenced events far beyond its borders. It aroused nationalist and anti-colonial feelings, not only in the "Reserve", but throughout the Protectorate and in many parts of colonized Africa.

Many of the roots of modern Botswana nationalism sprouted in the Crisis of 1948-1956. Bamangwato Reserve was the largest and most populated district in the Protectorate. The largest town — Serowe — was its capital, and the largest concentration of educated people resided there. Nearly every modern political party was founded by people living in this Reserve, and most of them in some way participated in the Crisis. This event taught many future national leaders their first lessons in politics.

Origins of the Crisis

In June 1949 the Crisis came out into the open when the BaNgwato in the Serowe kgotla recognized Seretse Khama as their Kgosi and rejected his uncle, Tshekedi Khama, as Motshwareledi. A storm had been raging, however, for nearly a year.

Seretse had been overseas studying law in Oxford and London. His late father's younger brother, Tshekedi, had been acting Kgosi

since 1925, when Seretse's father, Sekgoma II, died while Kgosi. Seretse was then only four years old. As future Kgosi, Seretse was very well educated. Thus, in 1948 at the age of twenty-seven, Seretse was expected to return home from England, trained as a lawyer and ready to assume bogosi, probably in 1949.

Then, in late 1948 while still in England, Seretse wrote Tshekedi a letter that had the impact of a bombshell. Seretse informed his uncle that he had married an English woman, Ruth Williams. Tshekedi was furious. Already he had selected a MoNgwato to be his nephew's wife. Tshekedi acted immediately. He ordered Seretse to fly back to Serowe and explain his actions in the kgotla. Seretse agreed, and Tshekedi prepared to persuade his young nephew to divorce this complete outsider.

When Seretse arrived home, Tshekedi met a grown-up man with convictions of his own. Tshekedi was a master of persuasion, but Seretse listened best to his own heart. He refused to think of divorcing Ruth, whom he loved deeply. In the kgotla meeting in November 1948, almost everyone sided with Tshekedi. But in the second kgotla in December, Seretse discovered he was not alone. Some of his uncles, as well as younger men who did not like Tshekedi's rule, began to speak in Seretse's favour. Both Tshekedi and Khama III (Seretse's grandfather), it was pointed out, had chosen their own wives outside the morafe, as Seretse had done. Seretse then left for England, promising to return to Serowe in six months.

Having failed to change Seretse's mind, Tshekedi laid plans to prevent Seretse from becoming Kgosi unless he divorced Ruth. Tshekedi assumed a white woman could never understand or help BaNgwato. Tshekedi acted in great anger, however, and suspicions began to grow in GammaNgwato that Tshekedi was in fact using the marriage to keep bogosi for himself and his children.

In June 1949, Seretse returned to a Serowe that was tense with excitement and concern. As many as 8,000 people came to the kgotla to take part in discussions and witness the contest between Seretse and Tshekedi. Unable to hide his anger, Tshekedi tried to intimidate his nephew with mockery and insults. When it became clear that Seretse was getting support from poor commoners, Tshekedi used this to say it could therefore not be a good marriage. Under such attacks, the young Seretse revealed his calmness and good heartedness — as well his political shrewdness. Seretse welcomed the support of poor people and asked them to teach him better ways than the rich. Seretse's humility won thousands of people to his side.

On the second day, the tide continued to flow in Seretse's direction. One of his uncles, Segola, rose to speak. "I say let the woman come, and their child shall succeed".

On the third day, Tshekedi made an outright bid to defeat his nephew. He asked for public support against the marriage, and most of the royal uncles and many senior headmen answered Tshekedi's call by stepping forward.

Seretse then placed the issue before the entire gathering. "BaNgwato", he stated, "I have not much to say. ... All my uncles siding with me should come onto the stage". Seventeen men stepped forward. Then Seretse asked for all commoners who supported Tshekedi to stand. Fewer than forty stood. He next called on everyone who accepted him as Kgosi and his wife as Mohamagadi to stand. Then, according to one newspaper reporter, thousands of men sitting in the kgotla "rose in a brown cloud of dust and applauded thunderously for ten minutes. ... Seretse grinned and slapped his thigh".

Opposition to Tshekedi

The BaNgwato had accepted Seretse Khama as their Kgosi. Ten days later, Tshekedi announced to the world that he and his top forty-two headmen were leaving Bamangwato Reserve and settling in the Kweneng. Tshekedi believed, perhaps, that by taking so many important men with him, the BaNgwato and the British would beg him to come back. Tshekedi guessed right — about the British. The BaNgwato, on the other hand, were glad to be rid of Tshekedi and his followers.

Seretse was popular among poor people, who felt that some headmen and royal uncles had become too rich under Tshekedi. During his regency, Tshekedi made his headmen collect tax (in money or cattle) and demand unpaid labour for one reason after another. In the early 1940s it was to help the British fight World War II; after the war it was to build the large new college at Moeng in the Tswapong Hills. And though these projects seemed worthwhile, the men who gathered the money and cattle and forced people out to work were also becoming wealthy. World War II veterans grumbled that Tshekedi had "eaten" money owed them by the British. Young men in the mephato ordered to build Moeng were annoyed at having to work hard for long months. Such men looked to Seretse as their leader.

Tshekedi had also offended others. In Serowe many people outside the ruling Phuti clan felt deprived of any say in Ngwato

affairs. At Shoshong in the south, "Bokalaka" (BuKalanga) in the north and BoBirwa to the east, Tshekedi's rule was extremely unpopular. He ruled these people through governors appointed from the royal Phuti clan, rather than selecting one of their own leaders. The BaKalanga remembered John Nswazwi, She of the BakaNswazwi, who had stood against Tshekedi's demands for tax, cattle and unpaid labour. In 1947, after years of resistance, Tshekedi and the British expelled Nswazwi and his people to Southern Rhodesia (see chapter 4).

Outside the Reserve, Tshekedi had his enemies, just as Seretse had his supporters. Tshekedi was regarded by BaNgwato and BaTswana living abroad as too much a "friend" of British administrators in Bechuanaland. In contrast, Seretse had the reputation of a young man in touch with the modern world. Inside the Protectorate, Seretse had the backing of younger, educated men and women working as teachers and clerks. Over the border in South Africa, migrant labourers all the way from the Rand to Cape Town sent messages of support to Seretse, and so did the African National Congress, which in the late 1940s was growing into a mass party.

South African opposition to Seretse

At first, the Protectorate administration was prepared to recognize Seretse as Kgosi. Before preparations for Seretse's installation got underway, however, the South African Government intervened. In secret messages sent to London, South Africa threatened to invade the Protectorate and cut off all trade with the High Commission Territories, if Seretse was recognized by the British. After 1948, the Union was controlled by the National Party, which had ridden into power carrying the banner of apartheid. The thought that a black man could marry a white woman horrified the Nationalists, who feared that Seretse's example might spark off rebellion among black South Africans. From the South African view, "blankes" (whites) had to be separated from "nie-blankes" (non-whites).

The British hesitated. They feared the Nationalists might not only carry out their threats but go further. Britain was worried that South Africa might pull out of the British Commonwealth and take the gold mines of South Africa from their British owners. Britain was also under pressure from Jan Smuts and the United Party, who hoped to defeat the National Party in the next election. Smuts reminded the British, who favoured the Smuts party, that if Britain recognized Seretse, the United Party would lose. White governments in Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) also asked Britain to withhold recognition of Seretse.

Britain, too, had its reasons for wanting Tshekedi back in power. Tshekedi had ruled for twenty-three years and was a very good administrator. They were ready to ask Tshekedi to return to the Bamangwato Reserve and take up office once more. But first they had to get Seretse and his children far away from Southern Africa, so that none of them could ever be Kgosi. The British had to prove that Seretse was not the man for the job.

The Harragin Report

The British set up a Judicial Inquiry hoping to show two things: that the June 1949 kgotla had not been conducted in accordance with SeTswana law for recognizing a Kgosi and that Seretse was not a "fit and proper person" to be the BaNgwato Kgosi. In November 1949 members of the Inquiry took evidence in Serowe and Lobatse. The group was headed by Sir Walter "Pops" Harragin, Chief Justice of the High Commission Territories. In December, Harragin submitted his Report to the British Government.

The Report backfired in Britain's face. Harragin argued that the June kgotla was correct and that Seretse Khama was himself a "fit and proper person" to become Kgosi. The only reasons for standing in Seretse's way were the objections of the South African and Southern Rhodesian governments. The British Government was outraged. These reasons were good enough, but Britain could not say so in public. It had been lying by saying that South Africa and Rhodesia had nothing to do with Bechuanaland's affairs.

The only answer was to sweep Harragin's Report under the carpet and try another dodge. The Report sat on a shelf and remained secret for the next thirty years (the public were allowed to see it in 1981, a year after Seretse's death). Then, in February 1950, the British invited Seretse to London to "discuss the future". Ruth and many BaNgwato urged him to remain, fearing he might not be allowed to return. But Seretse said that, as Kgosi, he had to show trust in the Government which ruled the Protectorate. He flew to London. Upon arrival he was told that he must give up bogosi for himself and his children. To soften the demand, the British offered him a good job in far away Jamaica (West Indies). Seretse refused.

Britain then came out in the open. Seretse was told he was banned from bogosi and would not be allowed to return home.

British politics and Seretse's exile

Newspapers all over the world reported what the British had done. This publicity hurt the Labour Party, then barely in control of

Parliament. Labour feared that some of its party members would vote with the Conservative Party in protest over the Seretse affair and topple the Labour Government. To head off this threat, Labour leaders held talks with the Conservative leaders and informed them of their secret support for South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. To dampen opposition, Labour also told Parliament that Seretse would be allowed to return home for a short while in order to collect his wife (then expecting their first child) and make arrangements for the care of his cattle and other property.

Between April and August 1950 Seretse was back in Bechuanaland, though seldom in Serowe. He was confined to Lobatse and allowed only brief trips home. Seretse's first child, Jacqueline Tebogo, was born in May.

In August Seretse left the Protectorate, flying from the Gaborone airfield, with the instructions that he could not return for five years. On the 17th, before boarding the plane, he and Tshekedi met and talked. Tshekedi was annoyed with the British, who had tried to quieten BaNgwato anger over Seretse's exile by banishing Tshekedi from the Reserve. Uncle and nephew therefore pledged to support one another in returning to the BaNgwato, not as diKgosi, but as ordinary men. The agreement did not last.

Tshekedi's attempts to return

In October 1950 Tshekedi was misled by reports that British supporters of Seretse were calling Seretse "chief". Tshekedi was upset as well by the news that someone had burnt down his big house in Serowe. In Mahalapye a group of women also fought with his supporters. Feeling betrayed, Tshekedi attacked Seretse for breaking the Gaborone agreement, and the two men became enemies once more.

Tshekedi set to work on getting back to Bamangwato Reserve. Perhaps becoming Kgosi was a thought turning in his mind. In March 1951 he flew to London, where for four months he used his influence on British politicians. The Labour Government, again fearing defeat in Parliament, decided to send three "observers" to the Protectorate and ask the BaNgwato if they wanted Tshekedi to return. At the time, fights between supporters of Seretse and Tshekedi had broken out.

The "observers" learned that Seretse was as popular as ever. They arrived in the Protectorate in July and spent a month sampling opinion. The three man team comprised a retired politician, a trade unionist and a university professor. Nearly all the BaNgwato, men

and women from every part of the Reserve, told them the same thing. They were strongly opposed to Tshekedi and wanted Seretse as Kgosi.

Back in England, politics had taken a sudden turn. In October, the Labour Party lost its majority in Parliament and had to call elections. The Conservative Party won and formed a new Government. It was their turn to deal with the Seretse question.

Losing no time to influence events, Tshekedi flew off to London. Within weeks, his charm had won the Conservative cabinet to his side. In December the Conservative Government ruled that Tshekedi was free to return to the Bamangwato Reserve from exile. Fearful of arousing open resistance, however, Tshekedi elected to settle away from Serowe. He and his followers established a new village, named Pilikwe, south of the Tswapong Hills.

Early attempts to restore Seretse

In Serowe, Seretse's supporters faced an uphill struggle in their efforts to overturn the banishment order. The most outspoken pro-Seretse group were the young men of Seretse's mophato, MaLekantwa, led by Lenyeletse Seretse. Among the MaLekantwa were Mout Nwako and Kenneth Koma. In the early 1950s, these men directed attacks at a group of royal uncles, headed by Keaboka, who had been appointed senior kgosana by the BaNgwato in October 1950. Keaboka and his men were accused of being too hungry for power and wealth. This was another way of saying they were doing too little to get Seretse back.

Keaboka was under great pressure. Since Seretse's exile, sympathetic officials had worked well with Keaboka until late 1951, when the Resident Commissioner placed a tough District Commissioner in charge and allowed Tshekedi back into the Reserve. Keaboka and his men then quarrelled with the DC, trying to show that they, not Tshekedi, were still senior. When the young MaLekantwa attacked him, Keaboka claimed he was pro-Seretse and tried to lead the pro-Seretse forces in order to preserve his own position.

Keaboka then flew to Britain. He and six other leaders went to London in order to influence British opinion. They attended public meetings and spoke in support of Seretse. The Conservative Government reacted in anger. They refused to meet Keaboka's group and then announced that Seretse's exile was being made permanent. He would never be allowed to return to Bechuanaland again. To make matters worse, Keaboka lost Seretse's own support after foolishly calling on him to divorce Ruth.

Soon after returning home, Keaboka's leadership ended in disaster. In June Keaboka and his followers tried to hold a political meeting in the kgotla. When the DC ordered the police to stop the meeting and drove his truck through the crowd to break it up, a riot erupted. After the kgotla was cleared, the bodies of three policeman (all Basotho) were found stoned to death. Keaboka and several others were then arrested, tried in court and jailed.

From this point, the pro-Seretse camp was led by educated young men. To them, Seretse represented the hope of doing away with a colonial system dominated by royal autocrats and replacing it with a more democratic kind of government. In 1953, the prominent MoNgwato writer, Leetile Raditladi, who himself had been sent into exile by Tshekedi in the 1930s, tried to found a political party for these men. He called it the Bamangwato National Congress. Its members included K.T. Motsete and M.T. Chiepe, as well as the MaLekantwa activists. The BNC did not get very far. The British paid no attention to it, and Raditladi soon left Serowe to resume trade union work in Francistown.

Changes in the British mood

Protectorate officials still wanted a strong bogosi without Seretse and opposed democracy, with or without him. And more importantly, they wanted Tshekedi back. In May 1953, after the BaNgwato failed to elect their "Tribal Authority", the Government chose Rasebolai Kgamane, next in royal senority after Tshekedi and Tshekedi's leading supporter. Three times the BaNgwato refused to elect Rasebolai, but the British went ahead and put him in charge of all local government. Rasebolai proved to be an efficient ruler, but as long as Seretse was away, he was not respected by the BaNgwato.

Eventually Britain began to change its ideas about the Protectorate and, with them, Seretse's case. In 1955, after the hardline racist and republican J.G. Strijdom took over from D.F. Malan as Prime Minister, South Africa became more determined to weaken its links with Britain, and the British seemed less eager to please the South Africans. The British also saw opportunities in the Protectorate for economic development. One was exporting beef from the new abattoir at Lobatse, another was opening up copper mining in the Bamangwato Reserve.

In 1955 representatives from the Labour Party began to approach the Conservative Government about lifting Seretse's exile. Disturbing reports had also been coming in about disobedience towards Rasebolai, particularly in the BuKalanga sub-district, and the British were worried even more by the refusal of BaNgwato

Rasebolai Kgamane

leaders in the Serowe kgotla to allow copper prospecting and mining to begin.

By then the Conservatives were yielding to pressure for independence in certain parts of the British Empire. And in the Protectorate, demands were growing for the introduction of a Legislative Council, as a way of bringing Africans into the law-making process of government (see chapter 12). Foremost among those calling for a LEGCO was Tshekedi Khama, who emerged in the 1950s as a nationalist politician. Tshekedi's stature among the British was important in getting them to agree to LEGCO, and no doubt many Protectorate officials thought of him as the new national leader. If the territory was going to be reorganized for self-government, however, the Seretse question would have to be resolved.

In mid-1956 uncle and nephew buried their differences. In London Tshekedi met Seretse and together they called for Seretse's return home so that development and democracy could begin in Bechuanaland. In September, the British agreed — on condition that Seretse and his children remained ordinary citizens and did not aspire for bogosi. A month later, on 10 October, after his plane landed at Francistown airport, Seretse set foot on home soil once more. Thus did years of exile come to an end and a new era in Botswana history begin.

The meanings of the BaNgwato Crisis

The long troubles over Seretse's rightful place reveal a great deal about major events unfolding throughout the Protectorate during the 1950s. For one thing, the Crisis helped to change "tribalists" into "nationalists". In chapter 13 the names of many founders of the nationalist political parties you will recognize as having come from the Bamangwato Reserve, where they learnt their politics as supporters of Seretse during the Crisis. L.D. Raditladi went on to found the Federal Party in 1958. K.T. Motsete helped found the People's Party in 1960 (with P.G. Matante of Serowe, who was a Seretse supporter while working on the Witwatersrand). Seretse Khama himself helped found the Democratic Party in 1962 and was joined among others by Lenyeletse Seretse, Mout Nwako and Gaositwe Chiepe, sister of the late M.T. Chiepe. And in 1965, Kenneth Koma founded the National Front.

The Crisis spurred younger, educated people forward in their quest for a more democratic and economically developed society. The young "democrats" clashed with the "neo-traditionalists" led by Keaboka, even though both groups supported Seretse. Keaboka and other royal uncles and headmen wanted Seretse back so that they themselves could replace the uncles and headmen who had become powerful under Tshekedi. They wanted only a change in the old government, not a new, democratic-type government.

During the Crisis, other groups of people found the courage to speak out. Seretse appealed to the commoners, who were poor, against the royal uncles and headmen, who had become rich by supporting Tshekedi. Seretse also won support from headmen and educated youth from non-Phuti and non-BaTswana groups. They wanted more self-government within the Reserve. But the largest and most vocal group were the women. Perhaps more than any other single group, they developed a new political voice in and outside the kgotla as supporters of Seretse and his marriage.

The Crisis also had its meaning outside the Reserve and the Protectorate. For seven years, Seretse's marriage and his bogosi were important issues in the British press and Parliament. Race consciousness and prejudice played their part. Any story of a black African "chief" who marries a white woman will sell newspapers. Yet, there was much more to the story than that. Seretse, as anyone could tell, was very bright and a man with a heart. His was a real love story. He was no ordinary chief, either. He was a Kgosi of a large morafe just up the road from South Africa, where racial mixing was a punishable crime. What he had done. out of love,

aroused the deepest hatred among the proponents of white supremacy. Such an act required courage.

No ordinary man would go into exile, infuriate his uncles and risk losing his position in society, simply to remain married to the woman of his choice. Seretse was not proud and he bore no grudges. He was slow to anger, loved a joke (especially on himself), and treasured good company. At heart he wanted most to be around people. Yet, he chose the isolation of exile.

The world sensed that Seretse was a man of principle. Many people recoiled at the thought of a black-white marriage, but they still recognized in Seretse something deserving of respect. In the end, his simple decision to abide by his marriage vows forced his enemies into retreat. Perhaps several decades from now, when a new History of Southern Africa is written, Seretse's marriage may be regarded as the point when whites began to give up the idea of dominating blacks.

Chapter 10

The North-East and South-East

In many ways the peoples of the North-East and South-East had similar historical experiences. Both suffered from colonial land alienation. The best farming and grazing land was owned by Europeans whereas the Africans were crowded into Reserves. Much of the North-East was owned by the Tati Company. In the South-East, the Gaberones and Lobatse Blocks were owned by the British South African Company. Throughout most of the colonial period, Africans were not allowed to purchase this land, and when it finally became available, it was sold at exhorbitant prices. Nevertheless, Africans from the Reserves provided labour for European farmers, mainly in order to raise cash to pay tax and to supplement their means of survival. African Reserves were unproductive, overcrowded, and suffered from soil erosion and overgrazing.

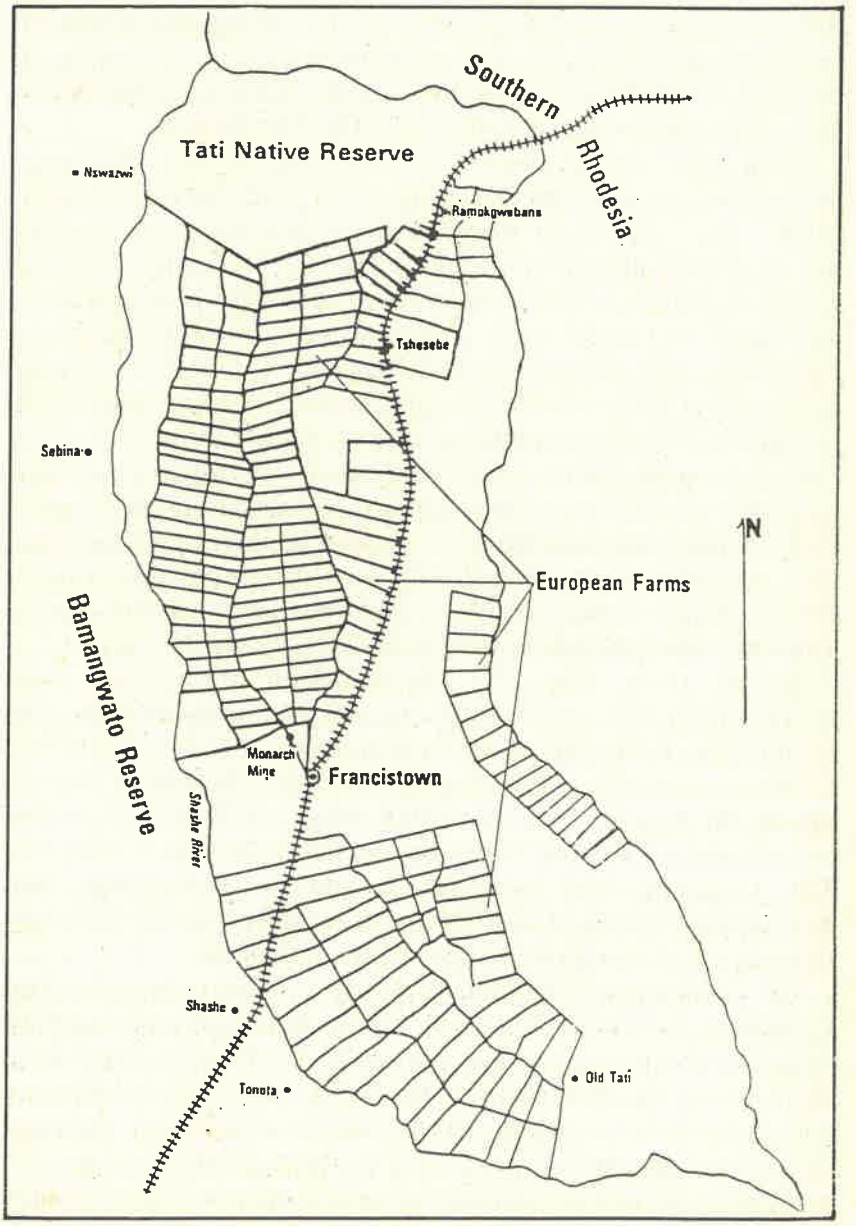
Africans also found it necessary to work in the two towns that grew up in these areas: Francistown and Lobatse. Both were dominated by European commercial companies, and both bore the earmarks of racial segregation typical of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Africans were the victims of discrimination in education, medical care, public facilities and residential areas. As in South Africa, the Africans of Francistown and Lobatse were required to live in "townships", where crowding, poor sanitation, disease and crime were part of everyday life.

The North-East

The present North-East District is an administrative name given to the area otherwise known as "Tati". Originally, the Tati attracted European prospectors in search of gold. At the turn of the nineteenth century, when gold mining declined, the Tati Company held concessions over most of the Tati. From then until 1966, the Tati Company divided up this land for sale to European farmers. As a result, the indigenous Africans lost nearly all of their arable and grazing land. Those most affected were the IKalanga-speaking groups, who had lived in the area for generations, and the Se-Tswana-speaking BaKhurutshe, who had settled there in the 1840s.

Before they were pushed aside by the Tati Company, the

BaKalanga had lived in autonomous settlements throughout the area. They were part of a confederation held together by the Mwali cult and the IKalanga language and culture. Mwali united the BaKalanga, who spoke different dialects, by providing them with a common set of religious beliefs. Adherents to Mwali are found in present-day northeastern Botswana and western Zimbabwe.



Map 6 The North-East (Tati District)

In the nineteenth century, the Tati area stood between two powerful states which claimed authority over the BaKalanga. In the East, the AmaNdebele Nkosi, Umziligazi, extracted tribute from the BaKalanga. From his capital, guBulawayo, Umziligazi sent his impis to collect cattle, grain and other items from the Tati dwellers. A number of BaKalanga were conscripted into the AmaNdebele army. To the West, Khama III of the BaNgwato also claimed authority over the Tati on the basis that his meraka stood between the Shashi and Motloutse rivers. Khama argued, too, that the area settled by the BaKhurutse was his since the BaKhurutse had fled to his capital, Shoshong, for safety from the AmaNdebele.

When gold was discovered in the Tati in 1867, European prospectors and land speculators made the issue even more complicated. The Tati "Gold Rush" lasted only a few years, because mining proved difficult and costly and because the diamond mine in Kimberley (diamonds were also discovered in 1867) promised faster and bigger returns for white fortune-seekers. But European land speculators realized that Tati land was fertile and set up concession companies in the hopes of later selling land to European farmers. As concession companies competed with each other for control of the Tati, the signatures of either Lobengula (Umziligazi's son and successor) and Khama were sought for and used to prove "ownership". Khama and Lobengula cooperated in order to demonstrate their respective claims of authority over the "disputed territory". Neither African leader wished to give away land, and the concessionaires kept quiet about their plans to take over the Tati.

Several years after the Bechuanaland Protectorate was proclaimed in 1885, the British recognized the concession of the Tati Company as being part of the Protectorate and later awarded the Company control over the "disputed territory". Because of the war against the AmaNdebele, many BaKalanga and BaKhurutshe had evacuated the Tati area. When they started returning in 1894, the Tati Company had taken over, and the BaKalanga and BaKhurutshe automatically became their subjects. In 1911 the Tati Company was recognized as sole owner of the land.

Tati Company rule was very exploitative. Anyone living on Tati Company land had to pay tax, provide firewood and labour, and be subject to the rules of Company officials. The Company appointed the Kgosi of the BaKhurutshe, Rauwe, as their chief tax collector and policeman. Company land available to Africans was very limited, because more and more of the good farming and grazing areas were divided into farms and sold to whites. Also, Africans wanting to sell their surplus grain and cattle were required to sell

them to the Company at Company prices. Because of these conditions, many Tati residents decided to leave. Some returned to GammaNgwato, while others settled in the "Tati Reserve".

In 1908, the Protectorate Government rented from the Company a tiny area in the northern part of the Tati concession and set it aside as a "Reserve" for the BaKalanga and several other groups unwilling to live under Tati Company rule. It was governed by officials of the Protectorate and ruled through appointed "chiefs", who happened to be heads of the senior BaKalanga lineages.

Life in the Reserve proved very difficult. Tati Reserve land was not as fertile as Company land, and too many people with their stock were crowded into the Reserve. As a result, ploughing the same land year after year became necessary, with little chance of allowing it to rest as fallow. Stock, too, had little space, and grass became increasingly scarce. Gradually soil erosion removed top soils, and crop production declined, just as stock became thin and likely to die during drought years.

Many people tried to counter the problems of living on Company land and in the Reserve by moving away. Some groups migrated into the Bamangwato Reserve. Tonota, founded by Rauwe's BaKhurutshe in 1913, became a settlement for other groups, many of them refugees from the Tati. Individuals also moved to towns in order to earn cash to pay tax and support others left on the land. A few found work in Francistown, but many others had to migrate much further away. Workers from the Tati area were found in Johannesburg and Kimberley, in towns along the rail all the way to Harare and in the mine fields of South-West Africa. Not all these men were labourers. From the early colonial period, people from the North East showed interest in western education and gained employment as clerks, teachers, railroad employees and artisans.

Francistown and the North-East

Francistown originated in the 1870s due to the discovery of gold near the confluence of the Tati and Ntshe rivers. The "Gold Rush" attracted European prospectors and African miners, who established their settlement near the mines. African farmers in the area sold grain and stock to the mining community. Tati Company stores were established in Francistown to handle the trade between rural dwellers and town dwellers. Francistown became the first place in the area where Africans could purchase metalware, ploughs, clothing and other goods. The Company could therefore take advantage of their monopoly and raise their prices, just as they

could offer low prices for the grain and cattle which Africans brought in for sale.

By the 1890s, Francistown was mainly a trading town. The mining industry declined, and European farmers moved into the area. Like the Tati, Francistown was owned and controlled by the Tati Company. From this point until the early 1960s, Francistown served the interests of the Company and Europeans in the area. All trade was in white hands, the terms of trade were arranged to favour them and all land was reserved for their businesses and homes. Africans were required by law to live in crowded, unsanitary "townships" such as Blue Town and "Sodom le Gommorrah".

In the late 1930s Francistown also became an important collecting point for migrant labourers. The South African labour recruiting company, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), began to use Francistown as its northern-most base in Southern Africa. Labourers from the North-east, Ngamiland and BaNgwato Reserve, as well as from Angola and Northern Rhodesia, were collected there and sent from the Francistown airstrip in twin-engine "Dakota" transport planes down to Johannesburg. Others were sent by rail. Francistown also became a supply point for mine labourers in South-West Africa.

The large number of miners created petty trading opportunities for Africans. At the end of their contracts, thousands of men passed back through Francistown on their way home. Before proceeding to their various villages, they spent several days in Francistown, using their earnings to purchase manufactured goods in the shops. After months of constant and difficult labour in the mines, these men also wished to enjoy themselves. From many different villages, women settled in Francistown, brewed beer, and sold it to the miners. In the townships, the more successful beer brewers, known as "shebeen queens" became community leaders. Prostitution was also common. Small, makeshift restaurants and hotels fed and housed the miners, and the owners bought their food and firewood from African traders.

All this activity was restricted to the townships, and much of it was illegal under Company laws. By virtue of the Tati monopoly, Africans were excluded from taking part in the commercial life of the main part of town. No loans or credit were available to set up businesses, and land was not saleable to blacks. The Tati Company regarded blacks as labourers and reserved for themselves and European traders all commercial opportunities and land ownership. The racial policies of the Company were not peculiar to Francistown. They existed among most European settlers in Southern Africa.

Black vs White in the Tati

The Tati Europeans thought of themselves as part of the culture, ideas and attitudes adopted by white settlers in Southern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. In the 1940s, the Tati farmers formed a Farmers Association in order to guarantee low-cost African labourers for work on their farms. In the 1950s and 1960s certain Tati farmers even wanted to make the area either part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland or of the Union. The Protectorate Government, however, opposed this move (see chap. 14).

For decades, Africans had tried unsuccessfully to overcome white domination by moving. Thousands settled outside Tati Company land, either in the Tati Reserve or in villages inside the Bamangwato Reserve, such as Tonota, Sebina and Nswazwi. Others became migrant labourers, petty traders, or members of the small but growing labouring class in Francistown. Each of these moves had its drawbacks. Labour contracts brought in needed cash but required long absences from home. Living in Bamangwato Reserve meant more land but accepting the rule of governors sent from Serowe. In the Francistown townships, Africans had opportunities to trade but lived in slum conditions and in the midst of day-to-day racial discrimination. Those who remained in the Tati Reserve had political control over themselves but not enough land to make a decent living. In the 1940s people in the Reserve tried to move their cattle to Matopiatakana near Matsiloje, in order to create more space for farming, but the scheme failed. No matter where people moved, or where their stock was moved, they remained snared in a trap.

After World War II, new organizations emerged to improve their welfare. In Southern Rhodesia, where many from the North-East worked, Albert Motsumi founded something like a trade union, known as the Bechuanaland Cultural Club, for the purpose of improving conditions for workers from the Protectorate. The BCC also sent complaints to Protectorate officials about white settlers in the Tati wanting to ally themselves with South Africa. Motsumi's group failed to make any impact, however, because it was poorly organized and funded. In Francistown, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Workers' Union was formed in 1949. It was the territory's first trade union. Like the BCC, it lasted only a short while. More effective was the Rhodesian Railways African Workers' Union. Though based in Bulawayo, its leaders were Knight Maripe and Kenneth Nkhwa and its members included many from the Protectorate, especially the North-East. In 1954 L.D. Raditladi

founded the Francistown African Cultural Organisation to function as a forum for educated township dwellers. In 1959 it was succeeded by the Tatitown Cultural Organisation. The TCO was the first to talk openly about politics.

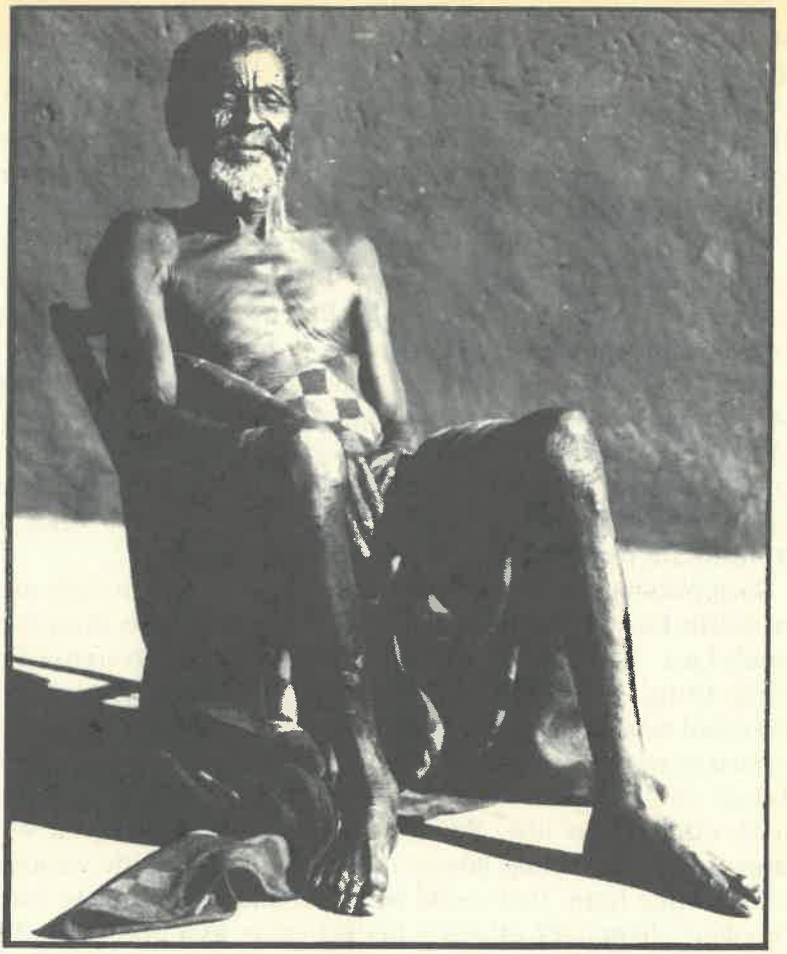
In early 1961, members of the TCO took a leading part in the formation of the BPP at both the local and national level. BPP Vice-President and ex-World War II veteran, P.G. Matante, was manager of a store in Francistown and already well-known in the community as an articulate spokesman for African interests. Matante and the BPP found in the townships a responsive audience for their message of "Africa for the Africans". Over 3,500 people (fifty-five per cent BaKalanga, thirty-five per cent BaTswana and ten per cent from outside the territory) lived there in appalling conditions. Sanitation was bad, water points were nonexistent, and unemployment was high; life was, in the words of a sympathetic official, "drab, unsavoury and depressing". Townships dwellers represented a mixture of groups which together had no common allegiance or sense of unity. The BPP stepped in to fill this void.

Although the BPP failed to achieve a national victory in the 1965 elections, it had a major impact on Government policies towards the Tati Company. In 1969, after mounting BPP criticism, the new Government of Botswana ended Tati Company rights over Francistown and the North-East District. After decades of exploitation and racial domination through land alienation, use of cheap labour and monopoly of commerce, Africans finally became free of white rule.

The South-East District

Like the North-East, the South-East District was controlled by white farmers during the colonial period, and Africans suffered land alienation, exploitation of their labour, and racial discrimination in the commercial area of the town of Lobatse.

The South-East was inhabited by the BaLete, the BaTlokwa and BaHurutshe. The area, which is approximately 1,492 sq. km. in size, was controlled by the BaHurutshe, BaNgwaketse and BaKwena in the early nineteenth century. After the Mfecane and Boer incursions into the Transvaal, BaLete and BaTlokwa moved from the Western Transvaal into the South-East to escape Boer rule, and for a time they paid tribute to the BaNgwaketse and BaKwena, respectively. When the Protectorate was declared in 1885, they had become largely independent of the diKgosi in Kanye and Molepolole. The BaLete were originally Transvaal AmaNdebele (not to be



Kgosi Gaborone who lived to be over 110 years old

confused with Umziligazi's AmaNdebele), but they had lived among the BaTswana for two centuries and had adopted their culture.

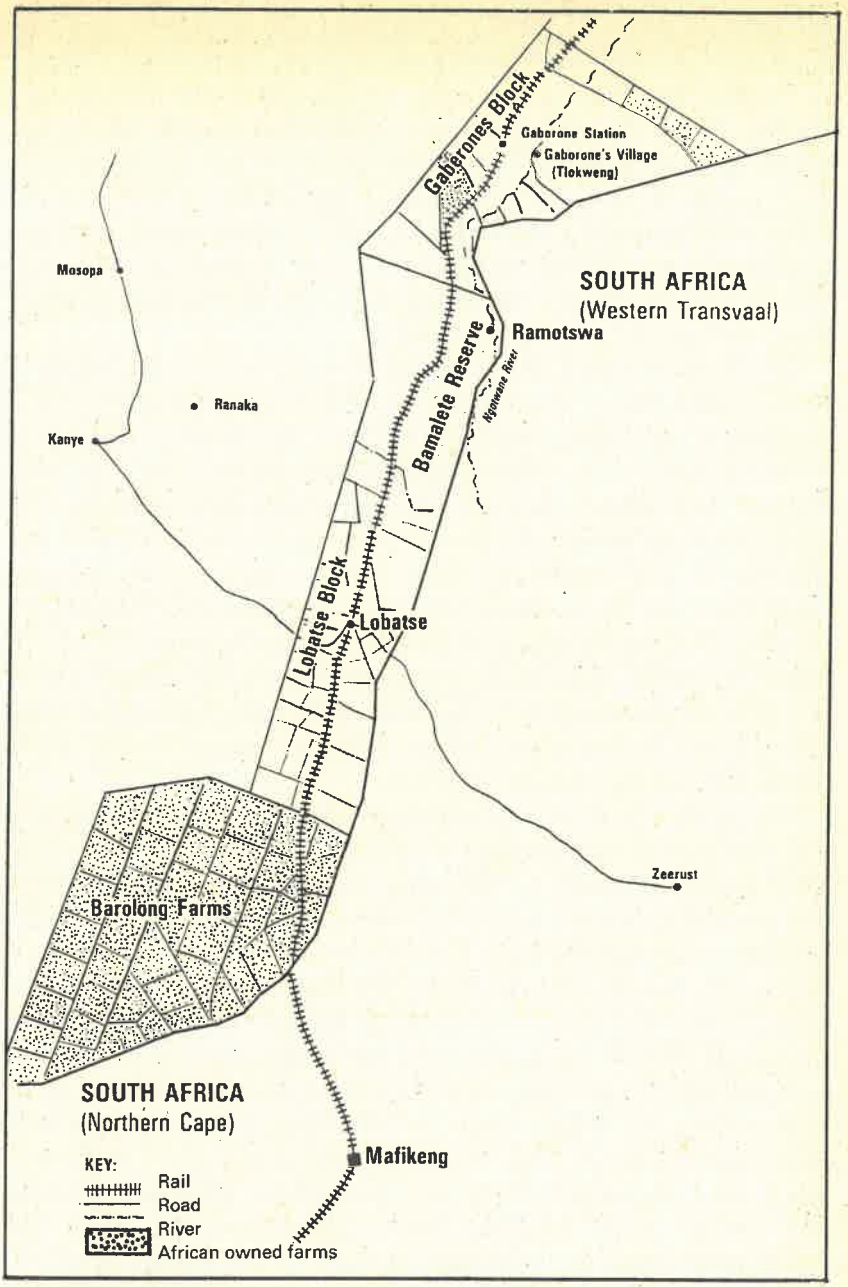
Much of the land occupied by these people was set aside as "Crown Lands" or for the use of the British South Africa Company. In 1895 the BSACo was given a wide strip with which to build the Rhodesian railroad, and in 1905 the entire territory of the BaTlokwa was formally granted to the Company. Kgosi Gaborone was given the option of moving his people to the Kweneng, but he chose to remain under Company rule and pay rent for the land long occupied by the BaTlokwa. The land used by the BaLete and BaHurutshe was likewise vested in the BSACo in 1905. In turn the Company divided it into farms and sold them to Europeans. These areas were called the Lobatse and Gaberones "Blocks". Block

farmers were expected to raise cash crops and cattle, ship them by rail to market and thereby generate revenue for the railroad. In 1909, the Government marked out the "Bamelete Reserve" to accommodate the BaLete, but it was small and rocky. In the 1920s the BaLete added over 3,000 morgen to their Reserve by purchasing some of their own land back from white farmers, but the area remained much too tiny for the population.

They and the BaTlokwa were hemmed in on all sides. The creation of the Lobatse and Gaberones Blocks prevented them from using these areas. The BaKgatla, BaKwena and BaNgwaketse Reserves, proclaimed in 1899, made it impossible for them to expand west or north. And the boundary separating the Protectorate from the Transvaal made it more difficult for them to use the fertile lands on the Transvaal side, where they had grazed their cattle and raised crops for decades. The BaHurutshe, who were regarded as residents of the Transvaal, had no land inside the Protectorate recognized as their own.

Such colonial land policies had a devastating effect on Africans of the South-East. Like other Africans in the Protectorate, those in the South-East had to raise cash to pay tax. Overcrowding, overgrazing, soil erosion and low soil fertility meant, however, that few could raise cash at home. The presence of white farmers nearby created some work, but farm labourers earned meagre wages. Some BaLete and BaTlokwa sold their cattle to these farmers, but the prices offered were low. Some Africans were trapped by the white farmers into providing labour. For instance, if cattle wandered onto a white farm, they could be seized and held until the owner "bought" them back at above market value, as a fine, or paid the value with his labour. In other words, white farmers were in a position to take advantage of the impoverished African situation to benefit themselves.

For most men, the only way to avoid this form of exploitation and obtain cash for tax and the living expenses of their families was to migrate to South Africa and work on Boer farms in the Transvaal and in the mines on the Witwatersrand. As much as any area in the Protectorate, the people of the South-East learnt to live without the help of able-bodied men. Along with the shortage of land, the South-East suffered from a shortage of labour. Like the North-East, the South-East became a supplier of labour to places outside the Protectorate and to white farmers inside. The Government took no steps to correct this situation, because officials believed black men earning hard cash from white farmers and mine owners would bring in more revenue than if they produced their own goods for the market.



Map 7 The South-East

Lobatse and the South-East

The town of Lobatse grew up around the railway station. The station was built at the point where the rail crossed the road from

Zeerust to Kanye. By 1900 a small hotel and several wood yards stood near the station. Wood-burning steam locomotives stopped at Lobatse for wood and water, supplied from the Peleng dam nearby. Soon, European traders established several stores for selling items to BaHurutshe and BaNgwaketse and to cater for the small group of white farmers situated east of the railway line. As farmers filled up the Lobatse Block and employed labour from the BaHurutshe and BaNgwaketse to raise cash crops, Lobatse station became important as a collecting point for agricultural produce being transported to South Africa.

Like Francistown, Lobatse served the white community, which in 1946 totalled 406. At the station hotel, built by the BSACo for train passengers, only whites were allowed into the rooms or to drink at the bar. In later years, when public facilities such as schools and the hospital were added, they too were for whites only. Africans who worked for the railway, in the shops or for Government were not allowed to live inside the town limits. Instead, they became "squatters" on the southeastern edge of Lobatse in a "township" known as Peleng. No provisions were made for the people of Peleng. Before the 1950s, clean water, proper drains, schools, clinics, stores, and recreational areas were unknown. Like Francistown and other urban areas in Southern Africa, Lobatse catered to the white community at the expense of blacks.

The Lobatse farmers, who depended on Lobatse for their supplies and transport of their produce to market, were a prosperous group. They depended mainly on fattening cattle for shipment to the busy Johannesburg market, and it is estimated that at times their cattle totalled around 10,000 head. For a few years, the weight restrictions imposed by South Africa in 1924 did not affect the Lobatse farmers, because they used fodder imported just across the border to increase the weight of their cattle above the 800-lb limit (weight restrictions were intended to prevent African cattle owners in the Protectorate from selling low-weight cattle in the Union and competing with Boer cattle-owners). They also reared sheep and goats. With their stock, the Lobatse Block farmers exported beef, mutton, wool, milk and cream. Their breeding stock, particularly Brahman and Afrikander cattle, was reputedly the best in the Protectorate.

To take advantage of the market created by these farmers, the Protectorate's first abattoir was established at Lobatse in 1927. The abattoir was built by the Imperial Cold Storage Company, operating from Southern Rhodesia. Unfortunately it opened when the Union of South Africa was closing its borders against Protectorate beef in order to protect its own markets for Union

cattle raisers. For a while the ICS used its Lobatse abattoir as a dairy to manufacture cheese and butter, which were exported to the Mafeking Creamery. In 1933, when foot-and-mouth disease broke out, the dairy was closed. From then until the 1950s, Bechuanaland faced difficulties marketing its beef and so many white farmers went bankrupt, sold their farms or abandoned them altogether. Not until 1954, when the Government took over the abattoir from ICS and expanded its operations, was beef exported in large quantities. The South-East, therefore, declined between the 1920s and 1950s. Not until the 1960s did it enjoy a recovery.

Africans in Lobatse

By the late colonial period, Lobatse had become a meeting ground for a variety of African peoples. Peleng, like the Francistown townships, was composed of a mixed population, the majority of which were BaHurutshe from the Marico district in the Western Transvaal who fled into the Lobatse area after revolting against the South African government. Most of them became residents of Peleng. Other groups, such as BaRolong and BaLete, were also represented in Lobatse. A small community of educated people from other parts of the Protectorate and South Africa were working there as clerks, teachers and junior civil servants. Job opportunities at the abattoir attracted labourers, as did construction work in the 1950s of several government offices, schools, the High Court and the Cumberland Hotel. By 1964 the population of Lobatse and surrounding areas had reached 20,000.

In the late 1950s Lobatse became an important centre of nationalist politics. And, like Francistown, its African residents responded warmly to the appeals of the BPP. The BPP found Lobatse to be fertile ground for broadcasting its anti-white rhetoric. Its organizers arrived in Lobatse when local labour union people had already launched a vigorous campaign of boycotts and strikes against employers who practised racial discrimination. The Bechuanaland Protectorate Workers Union had its most active chapter in Lobatse, under the leadership of Victor Busang from Molepolole (Busang also had ANC connections). Busang was pushed aside by the BPP, which had greater financial resources and wider appeal, and the BPWU was robbed of its leading position in local politics. The BPP rapidly increased its membership in Peleng, where rallies and speeches were held.

BPP success was shortlived. Local faction fighting began and contributed towards the 1962 split among national BPP leaders (see chapter 13). By 1965 the BDP had moved into Lobatse and

overtaken all of the three rival wings of the Lobatse BPP. In the 1965 election, the BDP ran Ben Thema as their candidate. A MoRolong from Ranaka in GaNgwaketse, Thema had been a teacher at Tiger Kloof and, from 1948 to 1964, principal of Moeng College before he entered party politics. Thema won the election. K.T. Motsete, co-founder of the national BPP and leader of one of the rival wings, also stood as a candidate. He lost his deposit.

Chapter 11

The South: The Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bakgatla Reserves

After World War II the three large merafe of the South — BaKwena, BaNgwaketse and BaKgatla — remained under the autocratic control of their diKgosi. Kgari Sechele, Bathoen II and, to a lesser degree, Molefi ruled so firmly that on the surface these Reserves appeared to be stable and content. The dikgotla continued to function actively, the mission churches enjoyed an increase in membership and attendance, and more people than ever seemed to be rising economically. African cattlemen made use of the new abattoir at Lobatse, they and others participated in the "Master Farmer" scheme and African petty traders emerged in all the towns.

Underneath this cover of well-being lay widespread dissatisfaction. Only a few could take advantage of the opportunities mentioned above and get ahead. The vast majority of the people in these Reserves were poor and dependent on the meagre incomes earned through labour migration to South Africa. Neither Protectorate officials nor the diKgosi did much to improve their situation. Instead, they worked hardest at enforcing strict laws and collecting tax.

Respect for Government was disappearing. Only Bathoen deserved any credit for trying to help his people. The BaKwena and BaKgatla expected Kgari and Molefi to devote most of their time to personal interests. Many of the men appointed by these diKgosi proved corrupt and uninterested in promoting the public welfare. Opposition was put down, sometimes ruthlessly, and usually with the consent of Protectorate officials. The diKgosi alienated many people by suppressing disaffected conservative groups who practised bogwera or tried to introduce independent churches. Even Bathoen had little sympathy with those who tried to establish new institutions.

In the 1950s, opposition to autocratic rule began to assert itself. Middle-aged and young men who enjoyed relatively secure incomes and jobs — progressive farmers, traders, teachers, civil servants,

preachers and tribal administration officials — became increasingly critical of diKgosi and the government. Together with semi-skilled workers, students and the outspoken poor, they formed the backbone of national political parties in the 1960s.

Post war society in the South

During and after the war, the South became the home of women, children and the elderly. The South sent over three thousand men into the AAPC, and at the same time many more began their careers as migrant labourers. In the Kweneng in 1943, at least forty-five per cent of the men were away, and three out of every four of those were in South Africa. After 1945, this pattern became worse. Returning veterans, who had few opportunities for employment at home, soon found themselves working on the Witwatersrand.

The Government was largely indifferent. The Agriculture Department was established in 1935, but its budget was small and its policies bypassed the average farmer. The Government believed Reserves to be unsuitable for commercial agriculture and expected farmers to strive for subsistence, rather than surplus, yields. Agricultural demonstrators were posted in the towns to introduce better methods of dry-land farming, but no funds were supplied for equipment, fertilizers or irrigation. The "Progressive Farmer" scheme was introduced to encourage farmers to mechanize and produce crops on a large scale, but mainly the wealthier farmers took part. A few young commoners, such as Quett Masire in GaNgwaketse and Greek Ruele in the Kgatleng did benefit. In spite of the Agriculture Department's efforts, little improvement in agriculture occurred, and after the war the South produced less food, on a per capita basis, than it had before.

The cattle industry improved somewhat. During the war, South Africa lifted its restrictions on cattle imports, and in 1954 the Protectorate reopened the abattoir in Lobatse, where cattlemen in the South could readily market their surplus beasts. The Veterinary Department also increased the value of cattle exports by improving disease control throughout the South and in other parts of the Protectorate. After the war, new boreholes opened up more grassland, and borehole syndicates, which originated in the Kgatleng in the 1930s and spread to other Reserves, enabled cattlemen to keep down the costs of buying and maintaining machinery.

Even these developments benefitted only the few. After the war throughout the South a smaller number of men tended to own the

cattle. As the Protectorate created new markets, cattlemen poured money into the development of breeds with maximum carrying weight. With advances in veterinary medicine and increasing reliance on boreholes, larger amounts of capital were required to maintain herds. For the small owner, the expense often proved too great. He had to be content with an ill-nourished herd that had little, if any, market value. And for the poor and small farmers, who owned few or no cattle, opportunities to acquire beasts and build up a personal herd were almost nonexistent. The mafisa system, which had helped such people in previous years, was rapidly declining. Cattlemen were reluctant to distribute their beasts among friends or relatives. They wanted them together in one place for watering, dipping, innoculating and supplementary feeding. By the 1950s raising cattle for market was a risky business, and only the best and biggest cattlemen survived.

For most people, therefore, making a living meant combining two activities: agriculture and labour migration. Men, and many women, spent most of the year working in the Union and brought cash home on holidays or sent it through the mail. Migrant labourers made it possible for their families to survive, but not to prosper. Those who remained at home lived long months at the lands tilling the fields, driving away birds and other pests, and waiting for the harvest. Crops seldom were large enough to see the family through to the next year, but the more food one raised, the more money brought from the mines could be used for blankets, clothing and household goods. Every year those working in the Union spent one to three months at home, depending on their contracts, but the cash they brought was never enough, and the time to sort out family problems was just as scarce. Young men cut their costs by staying unmarried or not returning home, young women bore children unsupported by their fathers, and grandparents shouldered the primary child-rearing tasks which in previous generations they would have been spared out of respect.

The heart of the people nevertheless, continued to beat. Communities maintained some of those institutions which had held them together in the past. They preserved mephato, which had been active fraternities and sororities in which life-long friendships were made and services to the community willingly performed, even though diKgosi had tried to use regiments as groups of unpaid labourers. Rituals performed on the eve of ploughing and harvesting persisted, as did prayers for rain. On Sundays, the large stone churches, built decades before by the merafe, continued to house large congregations. The kgotla head and elders performed their

usual tasks of deciding legal cases, and the ward maintained its importance as the centre of social life.

Only bogosi was moving away from the people. DiKgosi still commanded respect, but they exercised more authority than leadership. Their duty to the Government was control and tax collection. Whatever devotion they might have to their subjects depended on personal choice, because the people were too weak to force their diKgosi into submission. Some people tried. After the war, attempts were made to establish independent churches, revive bogwera and the mophato spirit, and get rid of unwanted "Chief's Representatives". Occasionally they resisted diKgosi successfully, but most often they lost. DiKgosi flogged many "recalcitrants", banished them to some outpost, or got them sentenced to prison. Each time the diKgosi clamped down on their people, Government consent was required — and easily obtained. Only after the mid-1950s, when they began to see that the days of colonial rule were numbered, did men and women assert themselves with confidence.

The BaKwena Reserve

Kgosi Kgari Sechele, who ruled from 1931 until his death in 1962, was an unpopular Kgosi. He was installed by the British against the wishes of the BaKwena, who deeply resented the banishment of Sebele II (see chapter 2). Moreover, Kgari was installed rather than his elder brother Mosarwa, who was next in line after Sebele II. The British chose Kgari because they regarded Mosarwa to be "the same type as Sebele" and because they believed Kgari would comply with their wishes. Kgari Sechele became Kgosi, therefore, because of the British.

Throughout the 1930s and after World War II, Kgari ruled with an iron hand. He tolerated no opposition and selected councillors, police and officials ready to do his bidding. Soon after taking office, Kgari ignored the opinions of most of the councillors who had served Sebele. In their place Kgari coopted a number of young men, who gradually accepted his lead. Kgari tolerated only Martinus Seboni and Makgasane Kgosidintsi, two of Sebele's most influential councillors, because of their education and good standing with the colonial Government. They were strong enough to speak independently, but most of Kgari's other councillors were "yes men". In addition, Kgari posted his representatives throughout the Reserve. Their task was to improve tax collection and to form permanent villages.

The BaKgalagadi, who owned fairly large herds of sheep, goats

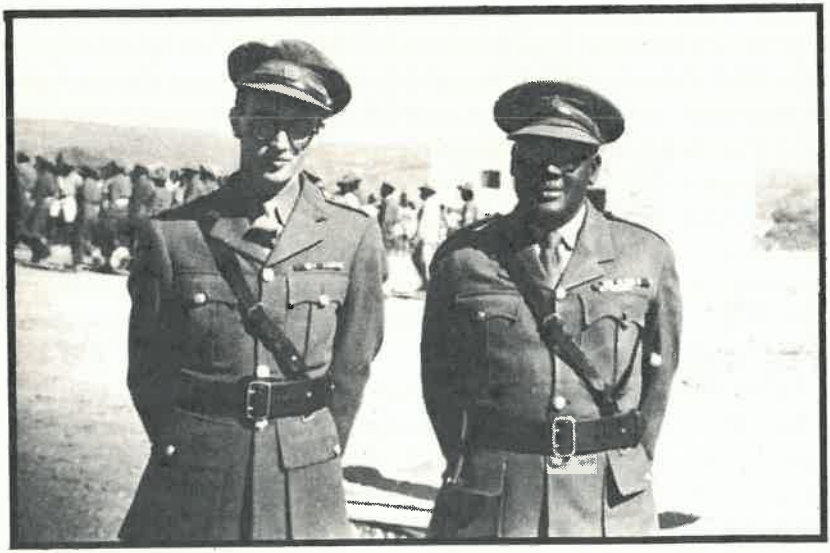
and some cattle, and who frequently shifted their homes to take advantage of available grass and water, were the most adversely affected by this system. Chief's Representatives (CRs) in the Western Kweneng forced BaKgalagadi to pay tax in cash, which few had. The CRs, with the support of BaKwena traders in Molepolole, purchased BaKgalagadi stock at minimal prices, then collected the money back through tax. As a result, BaKgalagadi tried to avoid paying tax by staying away from the villages. Kgari's men then forced BaKgalagadi into Lethlakeng, Dutlwe and other places, where they could be effectively controlled. From this period, BaKgalagadi men became more dependent on labour migration to South Africa than any other group in the Protectorate.

During the war, men resisted recruitment into the AAPC but Kgari made certain the BaKwena filled their quota (see chapter 7). Over 1,000 BaKwena served in numbers "1973", "1980", "1984" and "1969" companies, and in 1942 Kgari went with them to the war front. The spirit among BaKwena soldiers remained good during the war, and Sergeant-Major Kgari commanded respect. After the war, however, the soldiers became disillusioned. In Europe and the Middle East, Kgari had collected money from these men for the purpose of building a monument in Molepolole to honour their wartime sacrifices. When no monument was erected, the veterans complained. Suspicion grew that the money was being kept for Kgari's personal use. For years Kgari evaded this question, but he feared the ex-servicemen. Some allege that these men began to speak about "settling a score" with Kgari and to complain that while they were away at war, the Kgosi had left "maseapitse" to violate their women. Kgari believed the spirit of war still dwelt in the hearts of the war veterans. They were stubborn and did not submit like other men of the morafe.

Kgari was also disturbed by the growing public interest in independent churches. These churches had begun to appear before the war. They included the Church of God, the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Zion Christian Church. Formed by migrant labourers and outsiders (one of the Church of God leaders was a Kenyan), the independent churches attracted large numbers, including LMS members. They were especially popular among women and girls. Unlike the stiff and formal LMS services, the independent churches encouraged people to express themselves freely through songs and clapping. Spiritual healing was also performed. Kgari listened to complaints against these churches. The LMS priests had nothing good to say about them, others alleged that these church women "refused to obey their husbands",

others still complained about their singing at night, and Kgari also came to believe the independent churches "preached loyalty to God alone and did not recognize any temporal authority". He was also upset when church services were held in the hills above Molepolole at Ntsweng, site of the old capital.

After the war Kgari began to crack down on the independent churches. The followers of K. Sebolao of the Church of God were on several occasions arrested, detained and fined. Some adherents then left the church, but Kgari's persecution seemed to strengthen those who remained. When Kgari realized that attacking these churches could backfire, his tactics changed. Rather than jail members of the ZCC, whom he particularly disliked, he forced them to resettle at Metsimotlhabe, 30 kms southeast of Molepolole. Kgari was not acting to protect the LMS (since 1967, the United Congregational Church in Southern Africa). The LMS mission church was enjoying its own revival, generated in large measure by the good works of the Scottish-Livingstone medical mission under Rev Dr Peter Sheperd and his successor, Dr Alfred Merriweather. In suppressing independent churches, Kgari was stamping out what he considered to be opposition to his authority.



Kgosi Kgari Sechele and Dr A.M. Merriweather at the Molepolole victory parade, 1946

Kgari reacted the same way against those who tried to revive bogwera. Before the war and after, headmen and elders in different parts of the Kweneng initiated young men into mephato. The most

determined efforts were made by the BaLete of Gabane, the BaHurutshe of Mmankgodi, the BaKgatla Mmanaana of Thamaga, the BaSikwa of Kopong and the BaKgalagadi in the Western Kweneng. Kgari disliked bogwera because he believed these groups were using it to assert their independence from his rule. He also feared that the British, who deposed Sebele II on the pretext that he allowed bogwera, would hold Kgari responsible in the same way. For years, Kgari deposed headmen in these towns in an attempt to end the practice. But bogwera persisted.

Between 1952 and 1954, when the above groups once more conducted bogwera, Kgari dealt with them harshly. He rounded up the headmen and others for punishment. Many were fined five head of cattle. The headmen of Gabane, Kopong and Mmankgodi were sentenced for up to two years in goal, and the last of these died before his release. Kgari also imprisoned a number of leading councillors from these places and from Molepolole. Even in the BaKwena capital, under Kgari's nose, people had been sending their children to initiation camps in the bush or across the border. Generally, relations between Kgari and the subject groups in the Kweneng were strained, and Kgari frequently asserted his authority by pronouncing heavy judgments whenever he felt them at fault.

By 1956 Kgari's power began to falter. Too many people had become dissatisfied with his rule and had lost the fear of opposing him. The ex-servicemen, who had grumbled about the memorial money since 1945, finally took their case to Government. Kgari quickly refunded the money, and a memorial hall was built in 1957. Letlole Mosielele, headman at Thamaga, gained a victory for subject groups in general by successfully appealing against Kgari's prison sentence over bogwera. Some of Kgari's councillors began to speak out against Kgari in the kgotla. Patrick Letamo Kgosidintsi, a wealthy aristocrat, accused Kgari of taking bribes from and being under the influence of Asian traders, while stifling BaKwena traders. About this time the Kgosi's old supporters, the LMS "BaKereke", barred Kgari from the church's sacraments after the BaKwena built him a house and he put his mistress inside. In 1957 the people of the senior Ntloedibe ward refused to obey Kgari's order to resettle along with nine other wards at Boribamo, north of the town. For four years, Kgari tried to get BoNtloedibe to move, but they would not budge. In Molepolole and in other parts of the Kweneng, Kgari was losing his grip.

In fairness to Kgari, the latter part of his reign brought certain benefits. After the troubles which had plagued Kweneng during the 1920s and 1930s, many welcomed the relative peace and order which

settled over the Reserve following his return from World War II. After the war Kgari backed a number of public projects, such as the building and improvement of schools (including the Bakwena National School) and churches. Kgari was also an outspoken opponent of incorporation into South Africa. Against the wishes of the Protectorate Government, Kgari welcomed refugees from South Africa (including large numbers of BaPhalane). When the old autocrat died in Swaziland in September 1962, his people knew it was the end of an era. Kgari himself used to say he was the last Kgosi of the BaKwena, and many mourned his passing.

Kgari's death without an heir set the stage for a bitter succession dispute between supporters favouring either Moruakgomo, the eldest son of late Sebele II by his customary law marriage to Susan Wolf, or Bonewamang, the son of a, also deceased, brother of Sebele and Kgari (see genealogy in chapter 2.) Moruakgomo's faction was clearly in the majority and included senior royals as well as most of the commoners. This group recalled that Sebele II had been the rightful kgosi and demanded that succession be restored to his heirs. The Moruakgomo party also attracted the support of some of the locally emerging nationalist leaders a few of whom hoped to promote him as the future "paramount chief" of an independent Bechuanaland.

Bonewamang's followers, however, refused to accept Moruakgomo's legitimacy. An important factor was race. Mmamoruakgomo was born a "coloured". After a number of acrimonious public meetings and a failed intervention attempt by neighboring diKgosi, Moruakgomo was accepted by, according to the local D.C., "about eighty per cent of the people" during a kgotla meeting held on 26 November, 1962. Despite this development the Protectorate government decided to have a Commission of Inquiry settle the affair. To nearly everyone's surprise the Commissioner ruled in favour of Neale Sechele, a junior half brother to the previous two diKgosi. Neale quickly showed himself to be incapable, and as a result the political authority of bogosi declined. The lead in politics was taken by ward headmen and councillors, Molepolole notables such as Patrick Kgosidintsi, and ex-migrant labourers such as Ben Kenosi. Kenosi and Kgosidintsi helped found the BPP Molepolole branch committee, which initially showed signs of strength in the Kweneng. Its chairman was W.R. Ngwanang. When the national BPP split, however, many BaKwena left the BPP and threw in their lot with the BDP, the chief local organizer of which was Englishman Kgabo (see chapter 13). The BDP received support from some of the "old guard", such as S. Matlabaphiri and J. Mhiko, as well as

Gagomakwe, Kgari's widow. By election time, the large majority of BaKwena councillors were committed to the BDP, and most voters followed their lead.

The Bangwaketse Reserve

Kgosi Bathoen II, who took over from his aunt and regent, Ntebogang, in 1928, had a profound and long-term influence on his people. Bathoen began his reign as a suspicious man. Perhaps because his father, Seepapitso, had been assassinated (see chapter 1) and trouble had surrounded the regency up to his installation, young Bathoen distrusted all the old councillors around him. Bathoen was convinced, for example, that Kgampu Kamodi and his accomplice, Sebenego, were trying to bewitch him for the purpose of restoring Ntebogang. Bathoen confiscated their cattle and banished them to Kika, near Lekgolobotlo. Bathoen also ignored the other councillors, some of whom had served as royal advisors since Seepapitso's time, and replaced them with personal friends and servants who had less standing in the morafe. He also dealt severely with Gobuamang, Kgosi of the BaKgatla Mmanaana of Mosopa (see chapter 4). Bathoen concentrated all power in his hands and delegated little authority. His word was the law.

For a time young Bathoen also tangled with the administration. Officials disliked his rough handling of the councillors, many of whom were considered loyal. Most likely, Bathoen had removed them for that very reason. Officials also complained that Bathoen was using his police to intimidate his subjects and act as self-appointed assessors in the kgotla, disregarding common justice. The Government resented, too, Bathoen and Tshekedi's spirited fight against the 1934 Proclamations (see chapter 3). After losing that battle, however, Bathoen accepted defeat and worked within the new system. He was an active member of the NAC/AAC, served as its President for many years and sat on many committees and councils created by the Government. He supported the war effort, mobilized his people to work the "war lands" and saw that the BaNgwaketse women took part in the "gifts and comforts" scheme. After the war, Bathoen generally enjoyed the support of the Government.

The Protectorate backed Bathoen, for example, when he suppressed independent churches. After World War II, Bathoen was in constant conflict with these new religious groups, who sprouted up one after the other. First came the Apostolic Faith Mission (APF), then the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society

(WTBTS), and finally the Zion Christian Church (ZCC). The APF was brought by "coloureds", the others by returning migrant labourers. Bathoen opposed these groups on the grounds that they divided his people, but he particularly disliked the ZCC for their "noisy singing" at night and because they preached against western medical treatment. If the ZCC became popular, he feared, the result might be a serious epidemic causing widespread fatalities. In 1958 Bathoen ordered all independent church members out of Kanye and required them to resettle at Metlobo, 60 kms southwest of Kanye on the fringe of the Kgalagadi. In spite of their appeals that they be allowed to return, the Government upheld Bathoen's action.

When political parties emerged in the early 1960s, Bathoen's attitude created a great deal of confusion among the BaNgwaketse. Initially, Bathoen took part in the discussions leading to the formation of the BDP. Then he backed away, with his usual suspicion. Bathoen showed no interest in the BPP, either. The Kgosi, it seemed, was taking a dim view of modern political parties. In 1962 Bathoen declared in front of his people at a pitso, "I don't pay attention to these organizations". Bathoen said the parties would split the nation, and he was suspicious of BaNgwaketse who got involved. He clashed occasionally with such local "progressives" as Quett Masire, who was deeply involved in BDP organizational work. Yet, like other diKgosi, Bathoen allowed all parties to hold rallies in his Reserve. In the political contest, he remained neutral, which tended to help the BDP.

The BDP easily won control of GaNgwaketse. The BPP, though it got off to an early start, failed to get off the ground. Peter Maruping was a prominent member, but he rose to become Matante's second-in-command and spent most of his time away. The BDP worked much harder at building support. They fashioned their appeal to suit local conditions. The BDP claimed to be the party of tradition and order. Nothing critical of bogosi was put forward. The leaders of the local party — Masire, E. Masisi (of Mosopa) and R.N. Kalaben — were new men but they carried most of Bathoen's followers in the election.

Bathoen woke up late in realizing that the BDP represented a real threat to bogosi. In reaction to the local government reforms of 1965 he became critical of the new BDP government and later got involved in party politics. Within three years after independence, Bathoen came out in the open as a member of the BNF.

Despite his autocratic bearing and concern for personal wealth, Bathoen was respected by many for his efforts on their behalf. Like Seepapitso, he was a tireless worker who devoted considerable

energy to projects he believed would help his people progress. Under him many schools were built and upgraded. Dams, including Bathoen dam at Mmakgodumo, were constructed, as were boreholes and granaries. His efforts resembled those of other diKgosi, but Bathoen was among the most efficient. In the 1950s the MoNgwaketse took a leading role in pushing for the reopening of the Moshaneng asbestos mine in order to provide jobs and revenue for the morafe. Bathoen owned all the buses operating in the Reserve, and though some grumbled at the warning "Sekalaba" painted on their sides, the BaNgwaketse had better transport than most other people in the Protectorate. For more than five decades, "B-2" was one of this country's foremost statesmen, and he deserves to be regarded as one of the founding fathers of Botswana.

The BaKgatla Reserve

After 1945, when Molefi was reinstalled as Kgosi, any hopes people had for improvement soon evaporated. The ZCC, who had worked so hard for his reinstatement, were driven out of the Reserve in 1947. When they were carted into exile, Molefi's mother, Seingwaeng, was among the MaZioni in the back of the truck. Already Molefi had thrashed her in public in an effort to crush the ZCC. For six years the MaZioni eeked out an existence as underpaid employees on a white-owned farm in the Lobatse Block. In 1953, after Joseph Lekganyane purchased them land in the northeastern corner of the Protectorate, they trekked three months before arriving at their farm, Lentswe le Moriti, in the Tuli Block, 460 kms from Mochudi. They numbered 312 believers.

Molefi banished the Zionists because he thought their religion was insincere and because they were disliked by the members of the royal family on whom he depended to run his bogosi. Molefi had learned two lessons in exile: that he could not support himself without a Kgosi's income and that without older men experienced in running the tribal administration he could not run the Reserve. Thus, in order to support his heavy drinking habit, love of cars, trips to Johannesburg and other personal requirements, Molefi became a rigid authoritarian.

Molefi's problem was, however, that when drinking he had no authority over himself. By 1950, Molefi had become an alcoholic with a "Jekyll and Hyde" personality. When sober, none could be more charming and reasonable than Molefi. When drunk, none could be more outrageous and unpredictable. Unfortunately for himself and the BaKgatla, Molefi was seldom sober. He feuded and

fought with everyone who crossed his path. He had rows with railway officials, the DRC missionaries, Government agricultural and veterinary specialists, tribal councillors, members of the royal family and innocent bystanders. His wrath was felt even by his old wartime supporters, Ipelegeng II (see chapter 5). Molefi took over the ownership of a bus purchased by the Ipelegeng with their own money.

Molefi's irrational behaviour and neglect of his duties halted all progress in the Reserve. As member of all the important councils and committees, nothing could be done without his approval. And Molefi was seldom present to give it. Thus schools, agricultural and veterinary schemes, borehole and land development, and many other projects that Government initiated in the 1940s and 1950s failed to function effectively.

When Molefi was killed in an automobile accident in 1958, the running of the Reserve was pretty much in shambles. Since 1950 Molefi had been frequently absent to undergo treatment for alcoholism and tuberculosis, but the Acting Kgosi, Mmusi, and his councillors failed to cure the ailing administration he left behind. Several of the councillors proved to be corrupt, and the public grew increasingly hostile to them and the royal family, who were expected to put things right.

The commoners' hopes then focussed on Linchwe II, Molefi's son and heir. In 1958 he was too young and had insufficient education to assume bogosi. For the next five years, while Linchwe attended school in England and prepared himself for his installation, politics in Mochudi centered around attempts to unseat Mmusi and his councillors and place Linchwe's sister, Tshire, in the regency. In April 1963 a group calling itself "Mphetsebe" petitioned for Mmusi's replacement by Tshire. Led by D. Seame, an old Ipelegeng II member, and representing the "ordinary members of the tribe", Mphetsebe also had the backing of the Johannesburg BaKgatla and their titular head, Letsebe Pilane. Letsebe, a clerk in the Bantu Affairs Department and an intelligent and self-assured man, was also affianced to Tshire. The move to unseat Mmusi and his councillors was essentially a power struggle between royals and commoners in Mochudi. Though distantly related to the inner royal family, Letsebe was distrusted by them, and his leadership of BaKgatla workers on the Witwatersrand gave him support among the commoners. The petition failed, however, because the councillors and the Government wanted to avert an open conflict in the hopes that Linchwe's return to Mochudi would end the quarrelling.

Linchwe II's installation in 1963 did little to halt the tug-of-war.

Kgosi Linchwe II

Before he became Kgosi, the warring parties had modified their tactics to take advantage of national party politics. Mphetsebe embraced the BPP, and Seame and Madisa Moremi established its Mochudi chapter. Tshire campaigned openly for the BPP, implying that Linchwe backed her (which he did). In 1963, when the BPP held their annual conference in Mochudi, Linchwe delivered the welcoming address. Linchwe, sooner than Bathoen, sensed that the BDP was an "anti-chief" party, and the BPP altered their campaign to attract Linchwe. By 1965, Tshire led the Linchwe-backed BPP campaign in Mochudi claiming the BPP stood for "chieftainship".

Meanwhile, the BDP was gaining its foothold. Many of the old councillors, long-standing headmen, and such entrepreneurs as "Master Farmer" Greek Ruele and businessman and LEGCO member, Norman Molomo, were helping to establish the party. Sentiment for the BDP was also strong outside Mochudi. The years

of general neglect under Molefi had been felt most in Sikwane and in many other outlying villages; the struggle of Mphetsebe was essentially a Mochudi affair. Letsebe Pilane sensed this mood, abandoned the Mphetsebe group, and became a staunch BDP member.

In the 1965 elections, the BPP won a slim majority of votes in the Kgatleng, but the BDP soon gained the edge. In the Kgatleng District Council elections held on the eve of independence, the BDP won eight of the fourteen seats, almost all of them from the outlying areas. By then, Linchwe had long cut himself loose from the BPP and was trying to rescue his deteriorating position by negotiating with Kenneth Koma for the establishment of a new, pro-chief party.

SECTION IV

The Merging of Interests

In the 1950s, a new, emerging elite took control of the centralized advisory and legislative bodies created by the British to stem general unrest. Many of these men were well educated, connected to royal families and economically secure. The better known, such as Seretse Khama, were popular with commoners. Some also got on well with a group of second and third generation white settlers who were part of the elite itself. Leaders of the new African elite were not diKgosi, and all believed in building a powerful central government at the expense of the diKgosi.

Chapter 12

The Legislative Council

In 1960, when the Protectorate Government created a Legislative Council, the movement towards full independence began. LEGCO opened the way by giving African representatives a say in the national law-making process. For the first time in their years under colonial rule, BaTswana had the power of the vote to change Government policy. Members of LEGCO wasted no time in using it. Within three years they laid the foundation upon which the Republic of Botswana was built.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate was one of the last British territories to establish a legislative council. These bodies, made up of officials and local residents ("non-officials"), were used to recommend laws for the approval of the colonial Government and the British monarch. Within the Empire, legislative councils (or "legcos") were the closest thing to self-government the British would permit. In such colonies as Kenya and Nyasaland (Malawi), legcos were initiated in the early twentieth century, long before the British thought of African independence. Legcos in these countries were reserved for white settlers, who looked forward someday to ruling on their own in the same way as had happened in Australia,

New Zealand, Canada and South Africa (and, in 1923, in Southern Rhodesia). Africans, who made up the vast majority, were given no voice whatsoever.

After World War II the British began to admit African representatives to legcos in order to quieten discontent. In territories where no legcos existed, the British began to look more favourably on setting up these bodies to please the more outspoken members of the African educated elite and, as the "winds of change" began to sweep south across the continent, to prepare for the handing over of full control.

In the Bechuanaland Protectorate, officials resisted setting up a legco. They preferred dealing with African leaders and European settlers through separate "advisory" bodies, i.e., the African (originally Native) Advisory Council and the European Advisory Council. When the NAC was established in 1920, Isang Pilane requested that it be given true legislative powers, but the Government rejected his call outright. From then until 1960 the furthest officials were prepared to go was in creating the Joint Advisory Council, which consisted of representatives from the AAC and EAC with the Resident Commissioner as chairman. Like the early councils, the JAC (established in 1950) was accorded no law-making responsibilities.

The early councils

The Native (after 1940, African) Advisory Council has a long and colourful history. In 1920 Government set up the NAC for discussions about the use of the recently-established "Native Fund" and "to enable chiefs and councillors to consult together and to advise government on native affairs generally". Isang and other NAC members realized the Council was intended to be a powerless body. The NAC was usually convened but once a year. Nevertheless, right from the first session diKgosi and fellow delegates used the NAC as a tool for putting pressure on Government. The NAC was prohibited from passing or abolishing any laws, but it could not be prevented from speaking out. NAC sessions brought Africans together from many parts of the territory and gave them the opportunity to consult one another and speak to Government with a single voice.

NAC members persuaded Government to act on a number of important matters. It was the major forum used by BaTswana to oppose incorporation into South Africa and to promote development in the Protectorate. The NAC was instrumental in getting

Government to assist in the improvement of the cattle industry, education, medical facilities, agriculture, trade licensing and water schemes. NAC members made many recommendations that were rejected initially but were accepted in later years. The minutes of NAC sessions, which are kept in the National Archives and in the University of Botswana Library, are an enormous catalogue of ideas. Many issues which today are debated in the National Assembly were first addressed, decades ago, in the Advisory Council.

For most of its life, the NAC/AAC was an unrepresentative body. Discussions were dominated by diKgosi, who also selected most of the Council's other delegates. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, diKgosi blocked official attempts to set up tribal councils to assist them in the running of the Reserves. Where councils existed, they either were manipulated by the Kgosi or controlled by royal uncles when the Kgosi or Motshwareledi was weak.

The makeup of the NAC/AAC changed over the years. Originally, the BaNgwato and BaTawana did not take part. The BaTawana lived too far from Gaborone, where NAC sessions were held (after 1930 the venue was shifted to Mafikeng), and the BaNgwato distrusted its purpose. Khama III objected to the idea of sitting with other diKgosi, because he felt the BaNgwato had made a one-on-one agreement with the British, not a collective one. His son, Tshekedi, attended as an observer on special occasions, as when the "Native Proclamations" were first presented (see chapter 3). Eventually, however, both merafe joined, the BaTawana coming on board in 1931, the BaNgwato in 1940 (the same year the council changed its name to "African").

The African Advisory Council, 1946

The AAC also increased in size. By 1944 the AAC comprised thirty-five members, eight from BaNgwato, four from BaKwena and BaNgwaketse, three from BaTlokwa, Barolong, BaKgatla, Balete and BaTawana, and two from Kgalagadi and Francistown districts. By then, the AAC had a formal constitution and its own standing rules and orders.

Alongside the AAC, Government created a white counterpart: the European Advisory Council. The EAC was established in 1921 and was intended to give a voice to white settlers in the Protectorate. Four members attended the first session, then six after 1929 and eight in 1948, each representing constituencies covering the entire territory, including Reserves. Additional members were appointed by Government. For years, certain members of the EAC pressed for incorporation into South Africa (and Southern Rhodesia). But by the 1950s, a few whites began to regard the Protectorate as a black man's country and viewed the future in terms of racial harmony rather than white domination. Such EAC members as Russell England and Louis Glover befriended leaders of the AAC and urged Government to develop the Protectorate as a whole.

In 1950 the Joint Advisory Council brought together representatives from the AAC and EAC. While the AAC and EAC continued to meet, the JAC held its own sessions in which eight African representatives from the AAC sat with eight from the EAC, along with eight officers. The Government intended the JAC to be a purely advisory body in which Africans and Europeans would have an equal voice. Africans made up the vast majority of the population, however, and they used the JAC, as they did the AAC, as a platform for demanding a greater say in the running of the territory.

Demands for LEGCO

From the start Africans expressed dissatisfaction with the toothless character of the JAC. They recognized that only a law-making body, composed of elected members, would give Africans a real say in their own affairs. Calls for self-government were not being made, but the attitudes of Africans in the AAC and JAC show that the notion of independence was just beneath the surface.

At the 32nd session of the AAC in September 1952, Kgosi Bathoen raised the matter of a legislative council. He argued that a legco would ensure continuity of policy in the Protectorate, where colonial officers with different ideas kept coming and going. A legco, he said, would also give the general population a feeling that, through their representatives, they were involved in framing laws

which applied to them. In the long discussion that followed, Bathoen received support. A legco in which all races were represented would discourage mistrust between Africans and Europeans in the Protectorate in contrast to the Union next door, where racial tensions were the order of the day. In the words of M.L.A.Kgasa, a legco would "bring goodwill, cooperation, benevolence and unity in diversity".

A legco also promised to reduce the age-old threat of incorporation. As Tshekedi Khama argued, a legislative council could pass laws needed for protecting the territory from acts of aggression committed by South African residents and their Government. Moreover, it could be used as a platform to voice Protectorate-wide opposition to the idea of incorporation itself.

Speaking from the chair, Resident Commissioner Edward Beetham tried to discourage such talk. The territory, he said, was not ready for legislative council status. The development of local government would have to come first. So would improved economic conditions. The Protectorate was too poor to support the cost of maintaining a legislative body and implementing its measures.

Rejected at one level, AAC members took their request up to the next. In the JAC Bathoen and Tshekedi hammered away at the legco issue in session after session. Tshekedi, always ready with hard facts to back his arguments, challenged the Government's contention that legco must await the establishment of local government. BaTswana, he reminded the JAC, had always had a system of local government, even though the British might not consider it a modern one. He further argued that in other British territories legcos had been introduced years before a modern system of local government had been introduced. Tshekedi cited examples: Kenya, Nyasaland, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (Ghana) and Uganda. The point was that local councils could be established alongside a legislative council, because the functions of the two were complementary.

This time, European settlers proved useful in stifling African demands. As long as the Europeans opposed legco, the Government felt less willing to yield. At the 53rd EAC session in September 1953, European representatives turned down flat a motion by one of their members, Louis Glover, to request Government to form a legco. The new Resident Commissioner, William Mackenzie, felt reassured by the defeat of Glover's motion. "The Europeans are not likely to be so keen (about legco)", he reported to High Commissioner J.H. Le Rougetel in South Africa, "and it should therefore be possible to contain pressure from the other (i.e. African) side".

In order to outflank European objections to legco, Bathoen, Tshekedi and other diKgosi launched the idea of a Federated African Authority. Their intention was to use it as a legco substitute and as a body to promote political unity among the Reserves. It never got off the ground, because of opposition from Kgari, Molefi and the Government. The notion of federalism nevertheless remained active in the 1950s and later surfaced in such groups as the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party.

Like the FAA idea, African attempts to set up a central legislative body got nowhere. In 1954 the AAC petitioned for a meeting with the High Commissioner about legco, but their request was turned down. For the next four years, the AAC lobbied on this issue from the Protectorate all the way to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, but the result was the same.

Local government reforms

Government resisted legco partly because it wished to see representative local governments established beforehand. Tshekedi was right in arguing that Protectorate peoples had always had local governments, but Government officials were concerned about the increasing number of groups demanding greater participation at the local level. This was particularly true of the BaYei, BaKalanga and similar subordinate groups, as well as outspoken "new men" cropping up in all parts of the Protectorate. Democratizing local government, however, was bound to threaten the diKgosi, and Government did not wish to alienate them. The failure of earlier attempts to impose councils had made the British anxious to cooperate with diKgosi at each stage of the reform process.

In the early 1950s officials and diKgosi held frequent discussions outside the kgotla on the matter of local government reform. The British proposed setting up Tribal Councils made up of two groups. The first would consist of hereditary and appointed traditional authorities. The second would be representatives popularly-elected in the dikgotla. To sugar the pill, the first group would outnumber the second, and the permanent chairman of the Council would be the Kgosi. Progress was nevertheless slow. The first significant breakthrough occurred in GammaNgwato, where events had centred around the Seretse Crisis (see chapter 9). Setting up a tribal council proved to be the basis for political reconciliation within the Reserve. The BaNgwato Tribal Council, begun in 1956, comprised persons representing a spectrum of interests and opinions and was dominated by two personalities: ex-rivals Tshekedi (who entered in 1958) and Seretse Khama.

The BaNgwato Tribal Council stimulated the formation of Tribal Councils in other Reserves. In 1957 Bathoen and Kgari agreed in principle to the establishment of TCs in their Reserves, and by 1961 TCs were functioning throughout the Protectorate. In "non-tribal areas" such as Kgalagadi, Government created District Councils with appointed and elected representatives. At the village level, Area Councils were also established, but they seldom functioned as the British intended. They were supposed to hand local power to subordinate groups, but the BaYei and BaKalanga, for example, used them as springboards to gain influence at higher levels. All new forms of local government, in fact, increased demands for a national, representative body.

The Constitutional Committee

Finally, in 1958, Government agreed to form a committee to review the legco question. In the April session of the JAC, Russell England got the backing of other European members and introduced a joint motion with Tshekedi Khama for the creation of a legislative council. As JAC member Seretse Khama noted, the motion demonstrated that most people in the Protectorate were in favour. Initially, Government resisted, insisting that reform of local councils had to be completed first. But after repeated pressure, the administration announced that a "constitutional committee" of the JAC would be created to advise the Resident Commissioner about legco. The Resident Commissioner (by then, Martin Wray) made himself chairman. Under Wray sat twelve others: four government officials, four African non-officials and four European non-officials. The African non-officials were Kgosi Bathoen, Tshekedi Khama, Seretse Khama and Dr Silas Molema, while Russell England, Jimmy Haskins, H.S. van Gass and George Sim were the European non-officials. In June 1959, before the committee ended its proceedings, the foremost champion of the legco idea, Tshekedi Khama, died. His contributions to the committee, however, survived in its report.

The report was tabled in October. Based on suggestions invited from the public and discussions at its three meetings, the committee recommended the establishment of a legislative council and an executive council. LEGCO would be "representative", having a majority of non-official members. Europeans and Africans would receive seats in equal number, with Asians receiving one. Representation was based not on population, in other words, but on what the committee agreed was the stake each racial group had in the

"progress and good government of the territory". Such were the compromises necessary to present a unanimous report.

The report came at a time when Britain had already decided in which direction it wished the Protectorate to go. Before 1958 Britain had for a while considered linking the political future of the territory to one of its white-ruled neighbours. After the Nationalist Party came to power, Britain steadily lost interest in handing over the Protectorate and other High Commission territories to South Africa. When the Central African Federation (CAF) was established in 1953, some in Britain thought it made sense to incorporate the Protectorate into Southern Rhodesia. Tshekedi and Bathoen were also attracted to the CAF ideal of multi-racialism. By the mid 1950s, however, they and everyone else saw that the CAF's notion of racial partnership was that of a white rider sitting on a black horse. In 1958, too, organized African resistance to the CAF was at its peak. Thus, when the Constitutional Committee held its sessions and filed its report, the Government had come to the conclusion that the Protectorate should go it alone. Government accepted the committee's recommendations without amendment.

By the Order in Council of 21 December 1960, the Bechuanaland Protectorate Legislative Council was born. Provision was made for between 31 and 35 members, with the Resident Commissioner as President. There were to be twenty-one elected members; ten each from the African and European populations, and one Asian. The balance was made up of three "ex-officio" members (i.e., administrators without official duties), seven officials "nominated" by the Resident Commissioner and a maximum of four African and European "nominated non-officials".

The Order in Council also dissolved the old councils. The EAC, AAC and JAC all ceased to exist. Africans insisted, however, that they retain their own separate council in order to preserve their rights of assembly. Until LEGCO had proved itself, Africans were unwilling to let go of their council. Thus, alongside LEGCO, the Government reconstituted the AAC into the "African Council", which held its first session in May 1961.

The African Council was much larger than the defunct AAC and included many men independent of diKgosi and their favourites. Carried over from the AAC were some of the "old guard": the Resident Commissioner serving as President, seven officials, diKgosi from the eight principal merafe, and two non-officials appointed by the Commission. In addition to these, however, the AC included thirty-two appointed and elected members. They came from thirteen divisions in the Protectorate and were either

appointed at kgotla or elected by Tribal or District Councils wherever they had been established. This group of thirty-two brought together emerging national leaders, many of whom were becoming prominent in nationalist politics. Like the AAC, the AC was an advisory body, but it served as an important forum for the discussion of national issues. The AAC lasted until 1964, by which time it was clear that the future of the territory would be decided by LEGCO members.

LEGCO elections

LEGCO represented only a step in the direction of majority self-government. The Government accepted the Constitutional Committee's recommendations in order to satisfy the minimum of African demands and to bring into the decision-making process as much as possible the European settler community. As a result, African-elected members held only one-third of the votes in LEGCO, whereas they made up ninety-eight per cent of the population. Furthermore, African LEGCO members themselves were not "elected" in the popular sense. Government wished to ensure that the black men who sat in LEGCO were similar to, if not the same as, those who were part of local governments as recently reformed.

Africans in LEGCO were elected by the African Council. In other words, the AC acted as an "electoral college" for the African members of the Legislative Council. The African Council elected ten of its own members (five each from the Northern and Southern divisions of the Protectorate) to sit on LEGCO. Europeans and Asians chose their members in open, direct elections (Government allowed only citizens of the British Empire to vote, thus excluding South Africans).

On 20 June 1961, a month after all elections had been completed, the first LEGCO session was opened.

The importance of LEGCO

Even before it began functioning, LEGCO's days were numbered. By accepting the principle of African representation in a national, law-making body, the Government had opened the way for African nationalists in the territory to press for self-government. During the first elections, the Bechuanaland People's Party was formed to protest against the racially-divided structure of LEGCO, and in towns along the rail line the BPP was gaining popular support. Soon after LEGCO convened its first session, the second major party, the

BDP, came into existence. Others were to follow (see chapter 13).

LEGCO became the instrument with which the Government tried to regulate the movement towards independence. It was a body that alone lacked any real power. LEGCO could not discuss tax or revenue bills without the President's permission, and any other bill or motion passed could be vetoed by him or annulled by the Queen. It did, however, pass a number of bills that became law, and as an assembly of people representing opposing interests it conducted its affairs in an atmosphere of considerable harmony. Men of future importance gained respect for one another in LEGCO sessions, and the Government gained confidence in its members to take responsibility for charting the future of Bechuanaland.

In June 1963, Government appointed three officials to begin consultations with the territory's leaders for the purpose of creating a plan for self-government. The officials were headed by Peter Fawcus, the Resident Commissioner, together with the Attorney General and the Chief Government Secretary. They met with three representatives from each political party, three diKgosi and three Europeans and one Asian from LEGCO. After these consultations, which ran from August to November, Fawcus's committee designed a new structure that became the foundation for the Government of the Republic of Botswana.

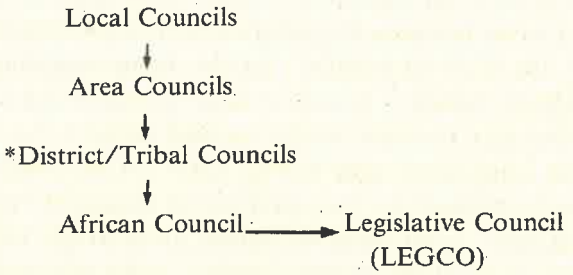
In the Fawcus plan, the Legislative Council would be replaced by the Legislative Assembly, which would consist of a Speaker, thirty-two elected members, four specially elected members, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary. The country was to be divided into thirty-two electoral districts, or constituencies, and full adult suffrage was provided for. In the place of the Executive Council would be a Cabinet, consisting of a Prime Minister (elected by Assembly members), his deputy, and five ministers drawn from the Assembly. A House of Chiefs, consisting of the diKgosi of the eight major merafe, was also established to gain the diKgosi's support for the package. (Later Bathoen and others, such as Linchwe, realized that by sitting in the House, they had been excluded from exercising any real power.)

Until independence, the colonial Government would play a key role. The Resident Commissioner (renamed the Queen's Commissioner) would sit on the Cabinet, as would the Financial Secretary as Minister of Finance. The Assembly, like LEGCO, could not discuss or pass bills into law without the consent of the Queen's Commissioner. Other restrictions existed. Without consulting the House of Chiefs, the Assembly could not initiate bills affecting

bogosi. The judiciary operated entirely outside the authority of the Assembly. In making and enforcing laws, the Assembly and Cabinet were also governed by a code of fundamental human rights that were protected by the courts.

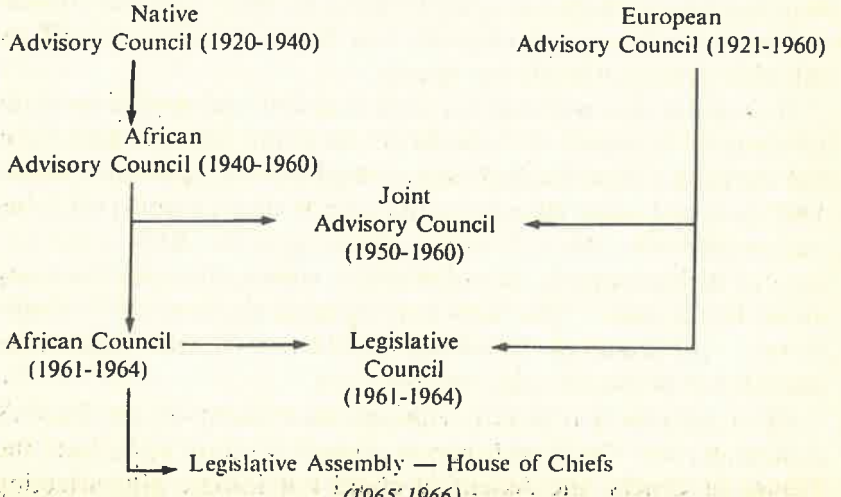
With this structure, which was accepted by Government and adopted in 1965 after the first national elections, only the removal of the Queen's Commissioner and the Financial Secretary from the Assembly and Cabinet were necessary to reconstitute an independent government.

The Local Councils under the African Council and LEGCO 1961-1964



*(In April 1965, local government was reformed by the new BDP Government in one of its first and most dramatic acts. The Local Government Act of 1965 established new District Councils made up of representatives elected by ballot. The diKgosi remained chairmen of these councils at the time, but they were not allowed to appoint others. At the same time, Town Councils were also introduced).

The National Council



Chapter 13

The Formation of Political Parties

Political parties are alien to traditional SeTswana culture. True, in the past, the morafe allowed open debate and people did take sides. Factions faced one another in the kgotla, and, when opinion was sharply split, majority rule usually prevailed. The purpose was to give the Kgosi a sense of where the people stood and to prevent his final decision on any important matter from dividing the community. Kgotla politics, however, were governed by certain principles that modern political parties cannot adopt.

In the kgotla, discussion and taking sides on an issue were confined to men. Moreover, the opinions of headmen, wealthy royals and the Kgosi's advisors carried much more weight than the commoners and poor royals. Political parties came into existence because the Kgosi and the kgotla system were giving way to new ideas about government. These ideas had circulated in the Protectorate for many years, but not until the late 1950s was it clear that their time had come.

The first idea was that people had the right to form their own organizations to present grievances directly to the colonial Government. Ipelegeng is an early example (see chapter 5), the Bamangwato National Congress another (chapter 9). Both were short-lived and failed to achieve their objective, but their members continued to influence politics outside the kgotla.

The second idea was that new organizations had to be formed to take care of the needs of "new men". In South Africa, where they had worked for decades, BaTswana joined such organizations as the ANC and the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), or created their own. Burial societies sprang up in the 1940s, as did the Sons of Bechuanaland, an organization with a distinctly national sound to its name. The Sons had chapters as far afield as Cape Town. In Southern Rhodesia, BaTswana formed something similar: the Bechuanaland Cultural Club.

The third idea was that the diKgosi were becoming unsuited to exercise power. In World War II, resistance to diKgosi and the Government was widespread, and after the war, opposition to

regents and diKgosi persisted in many parts of the Protectorate.

Slowly, these three ideas were moving closer to one another. Around the Protectorate, sporting clubs, student and cultural groups became forums for political debate. After World War II, the first trade unions took form among the small, but growing, working class in Francistown and other urbanizing areas. New professional groups, notably the Bechuanaland Civil Servants Association and the Bechuanaland Teachers Association, both founded by Archie Tsoebebe, proved effective in opening up opportunities for advancement of Africans in their fields. Many prominent members of these groups later became active in national party politics.

In the late 1950s, when it became clear that the Protectorate was heading for independence, the "new men" formed political parties as a way of presenting themselves as "national" leaders. Some party politicians were members of royalty, a few were diKgosi or recognized as such, but parties were led by men of education and broad experience. Persons of high social status were valuable to parties, but success depended mostly on the willingness of the leaders to work hard and organize well.

The Federal Party

The Protectorate's first political party in the proper sense was the Bechuanaland Protectorate Federal Party (also known as the Liberal Party), formed in April 1959. It emerged at this time for two reasons. Negotiations concerning the nature of LEGCO had just gotten underway (see chapter 12) and the Federal Party wanted to influence the outcome. Secondly, the party wished to challenge the continuing dominance of Tshekedi in BaNgwato politics. The organizer and leader of the Federal Party was Leetile D. Raditladi, who previously had been at the centre of attempts to form political groupings and associations among Africans in the Protectorate: the Bamangwato National Congress in 1953, the revived Bechuanaland African Workers Union in 1954 and the Francistown African Cultural Organisation in the same year.

Raditladi feared that LEGCO would be dominated by Europeans and diKgosi. His party pressed for greater representation of non-diKgosi BaTswana on both local and national levels through the ballot box. Based in GammaNgwato, the Federal Party appealed to the educated, and among those initially attracted were individuals who later went on to form their own political parties: Philip Matante, K.T. Motsete, and A.M. Tsoebebe.

The growth of the party was stunted at an early age when, in November 1959, Raditladi accepted the position of Subordinate African Authority in Mahalapye. Raditladi's move compromised the party's initial anti-diKgosi stance and created a leadership vacuum that Raditladi was unwilling to allow others to fill. The party soon began to falter. The Bechuanaland Congress Party (BCP), a student-oriented organization and older than the Federal Party, then briefly came to the fore. The BCP appealed to more radical opinion. Unrest among secondary school students was then growing in response to paternalism and racism practised in the schools. A notable example was the student strike at St Joseph's College (Khale) in 1960. For a while, the BCP tried to harness this disaffection, but it suffered from a crisis of leadership when one of its most dynamic members, Kenneth Koma, left for studies abroad. The BCP lost many of its members to the Bechuanaland Protectorate Students' Association. Politically, it was rapidly pushed aside by the latest, emerging party, the BPP.

Philip Matante

The People's Party (BPP)

In December 1960, with the Federal Party and the BCP in decline, the Bechuanaland People's Party was established. The lead was taken by Matante and Motsete, together with Motsamai Mpho, recently deported from South Africa for ANC activities. The BPP grew rapidly and was the first party to gain followers beyond a small, educated elite. Unlike all previous organizations, the BPP launched an aggressive campaign of public meetings designed to attract large audiences.

BPP meetings, held in beer halls and football grounds, quickly became a form of popular entertainment and a means of arousing political interest. Matante in particular was a showman. With his gift of oratory, he fired his audiences with almost religious enthusiasm by voicing their frustrations and grievances. Each meeting began and ended with political songs, often composed for the occasion, and speeches were made by people from all walks of life. Teachers, workers, "shebeen queens", trade unionists and many others each had their moment to speak. The tradition of "freedom squares", practised throughout Botswana today, began with the BPP.

In contrast to the Federal Party, which did not demand independence, the BPP called for the liberation of Bechuanaland. The BPP was committed to non-violent methods, but its demands were impatient. Soon after it was established, the party spoke out for immediate independence. The BPP also raised the battle cry against racism. At the time, the administration claimed that apartheid did not exist in the Protectorate. The BPP exposed this false claim by initiating boycotts and strikes against individuals and firms practising racial discrimination, especially in Francistown. The BPP also rejected LEGCO, because it reserved seats separately for Africans, Europeans and Asians. Above all the BPP worked towards inculcating a sense of national pride and self-respect among BaTswana, who had been subjected to colonial rule for decades.

In an effort to gain support from key people, the BPP had to tone down some of its rhetoric. In the beginning BPP speeches attacked diKgosi and lesser traditional authorities as obstacles to national independence. The BPP soon realized, however, that they would have to accommodate traditional leaders, especially in parts of the Southern Protectorate where diKgosi remained strong. Harsh words about bogosi soon disappeared in BPP meetings, and BPP leaders tried to develop contacts with diKgosi and people around them. Initially, efforts to hold meetings in rural towns and villages

were discouraged by traditional authorities, many of whom distrusted the intentions of all party politicians.

The BPP was supported primarily along the railway line. It was conceived in Palapye by Motsete and Mpho, had its first headquarters at Mahalapye and its first meeting in Francistown. Throughout 1961 its activities and regular meetings were confined to these towns and Lobatse.

Much of the inspiration and most of the funds for the BPP came from outside. By August 1962 the three BPP leaders and a number of their subordinates had made many trips to Ghana and Tanganyika, as guests of the governments, and had their first glimpse of independent Africa. In Accra and Dar es Salaam they attended conferences together with aspiring nationalist leaders from all over the continent. Through these contacts, the BPP began to acquire and ultimately to depend on external funding. The Ghanaian-based Bureau of African Affairs was particularly generous. Before 1962 was over, the BAA supplied the BPP with three Land Rovers and paid for other party operational costs, for a total of £9000.

Events in South Africa also played a role in the early development of the BPP. Matante and Mpho, as well as other members of the party, had served their political apprenticeships in the ANC [Matante later associated himself with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)]. From the beginning, the BPP established important branches and raised as many as a third of its members in the Witwatersrand. Branch leaders from South Africa made frequent visits to the Protectorate to speak to and encourage fellow BaTswana. In the early 1960s, also, a large number of political refugees from South Africa took up residence in the Protectorate. Their part in the development of political parties, however, was never central. Politicians in the Protectorate were in touch with political developments in South Africa, but they were inspired and assisted more by African independence movements to the north.

The Democratic Party (BDP)

Colonial officials were very concerned about the BPP. They feared that foreign revolutionaries were manipulating the party for their own ends, and they regarded Mpho, Motsete and Matante as irresponsible "hotheads" with whom dialogue was impossible. Like colonial governments elsewhere, the Protectorate administration believed that such parties had no real grievances and no real leaders.

In the second half of 1961, a new party emerged — and the Government, with a sigh of relief, encouraged its development. The

party was partly an offshoot of the ailing Federal Party, many members of which saw the need for moderates to challenge the increasingly popular BPP. Raditladi was among them, but his days of leadership were over. The new group centred itself around Seretse Khama.

Seretse was naturally suited to take the lead. As Tribal Secretary of the BaNgwato, popular though uncrowned Kgosi of his people and member of LEGCO, Seretse had created, by December 1961, a network of leading BaTswana throughout the Protectorate. They included many ex-teachers, civil servants, men with administrative experience and such persons as Archie Tsoebebe, Lenyeletse Seretse, G.S. Mosinyi, M.P.K. Nwako and Amos Dambe in GammaNgwato, Tsheko Tsheko in Ngamiland and Quett Masire in GaNgwaketse. Later, Englishman Kgabo was recruited from the Kweneng to serve as Southern Regional organizer. Seretse christened his group the Bechuanaland National Democratic Party after what was then the leading nationalist party in Southern Rhodesia. Soon thereafter, Amos Dambe persuaded members to drop "National" from the new party's name.

Seretse contacted the Southern diKgosi, but none were integrated into the party. He was not keen to identify his group too closely with these often unpopular figures. At the time, however, the Protectorate administration was exerting pressure on diKgosi to allow political meetings to be held within their Reserves. Some believed incorrectly that Seretse was responsible for bringing party politics to the rural areas and that he had the tacit blessing of many diKgosi. After July 1962 all political parties were free to canvass for support throughout the territory.

The BPP split of 1962

Several months after the BDP emerged, serious dissension broke out among BPP leaders. In June 1962 BPP Vice-President Matante and Secretary-General Mpho quarrelled over the siting of the party's headquarters. Mpho wanted it to be placed in Palapye, his base, and Matante apparently thought Mpho was trying to take over the party. Later that month, tempers flared in Lobatse. Mpho had arranged a meeting there for the purpose of investigating the Lobatse branch finances, perhaps because Matante had been accused by some party members of misappropriating funds. When Mpho drove into Lobatse on the 29th, Motsete and Matante met him and informed him that he and several of his Lobatse supporters were suspended (nearly all of the persons suspended had ANC

connections). Then, out on the street, a scuffle started when Matante reached for Mpho and grabbed his keys to the Palapye Land Rover.

Mpho returned to Palapye determined to fight for control of the BPP. Meanwhile, Matante continued his purge by attempting to get refugees Maxwell Mlonyeni and Phineas Sebolao forcibly deported back to South Africa. Matante and Motsete also attacked the ANC in public meetings, calling it a communist menace to Protectorate peoples. Tensions between pro- and anti-Mpho factions in Lobatse and Francistown erupted in a number of disturbances.

Mpho (centre, wearing sweater) addressing a rally of his supporters, 1963

Matante's opposition to the ANC element was probably influenced by political events in the region. Since 1960 the ANC and PAC had worked together under their umbrella alliance, the South African United Front (SAUF). In a way, the BPP was a symbol of this alliance. In early 1962, however, PAC leaders broke away from the SAUF, claiming that its ANC element favoured multiracialism and communism (in 1958 these same two issues had led a breakaway

group of ANC to form the PAC). Thus, Matante's move against Mpho may have been part of divisions emerging between African nationalists elsewhere (in Rhodesia at about this time, ZANU emerged after a ZAPU split). Clashes between strong personalities over control of party funds and vehicles and the siting of the new headquarters certainly sparked the fighting, but the BPP split may have also been the result of larger issues.

Whatever the cause of the dispute, the BPP suffered badly from tests of faction loyalty. Palapye stayed firmly behind Mpho, and Francistown backed Matante. Lobatse split down the middle, giving rise to two rival BPP branches. The Witwatersrand branches also split, an event which began their decline (in 1963 the South African government banned BPP activities in the Republic). Branches in the rural areas, where the BPP was just getting started, eventually swung behind Matante, perhaps out of respect for Motsete. On balance, Matante retained support from the majority of BPP members, but the split weakened the party at a crucial point in the political struggle.

While the BPP was tearing itself apart, the BDP was busy consolidating its hold on GammaNgwato and building strong bases of support throughout the territory. An established network of local notables was particularly effective in rural areas. The BDP also began to gain support among Europeans who were attracted to its platform of multi-racialism. Such men as Joseph Anderson and Benjamin Steinberg took an active part within Seretse's party. The BDP was able to dominate the reformed local councils, then well-established, and saw the value of using the councils as political platforms, a possibility overlooked by the BPP. For example, of the sixty-four members of the BaKwena Local Council created in 1960, forty-three were associated with the BDP by 1965. Included in this group were most of the "Chief's Representatives" and leaders of the major wards, though not the Kgosi himself. Of the remaining twenty-one non-BDP councillors, only four were BPP. The BDP also identified itself with new colonial government policies, initiated in the early 1960s, for economic development, abolition of racial discrimination and constitutional advance.

The Constitutional Consultations, 1963

When Peter Fawcus began discussions with territorial leaders in August 1963 (see chapter 12), the line between the Democratic Party and the People's Party (Matante and Mpho factions alike) was clearly drawn. The BDP had succeeded in portraying itself as the

party ready to cooperate with Government. In contrast, the BPP had taken an uncompromising, anti-Government position.

Fawcus met with representatives from all parties, including both BPP factions, the BDP, diKgosi and the European community. The purpose of the consultations was to create a constitutional framework to replace LEGCO and introduce "Home Rule" (i.e., internal self-government in preparation for independence).

During the consultations, the British dropped a surprise: they accepted abolishing political privileges for Europeans, Asians and diKgosi and placing power in a legislative body to be elected by adult suffrage — one man (or woman), one vote.

Only a few Europeans opposed these reforms. To drum up support and increase their representation before Fawcus, they quickly formed a political party of their own, the Tuli Block Democratic Party. This attempt failed, however, and the proposals were accepted by all parties, including the European representatives.

The outcome of the consultations was a great victory for the BDP. They had placed their trust in the good intentions of the Government and were rewarded with substantial reforms. The BPP representatives, who were convinced nothing would come from the conference, returned to their branches with their thunder stolen.

The Fawcus Plan also changed the nature of the political struggle. By introducing self-government and national, democratic elections, Government had placed the future of the territory in the hands of the nationalists. The question of independence was no longer in doubt. After the consultations, a new struggle had to be waged. Henceforth, the BDP and BPP faced one another. In order to control the new Legislative Assembly, each needed to campaign for votes in order to get their candidates elected. The party with the most elected members would lead the Bechuanaland Protectorate to independence.

The struggle for supremacy, 1963-1965

The BDP came away from the Constitutional Conference determined to launch a nationwide campaign to publicize the BDP and the changes resulting from the Conference. The party newspaper, *Therisanyo*, spread the word among the literate population. The editor of this effective organ was Quett Masire. The BDP national executive also devoted a great deal of energy in addressing meetings in all corners of the Protectorate. In the single month of February 1964, for example, the BDP held sixty meetings, even though eleven

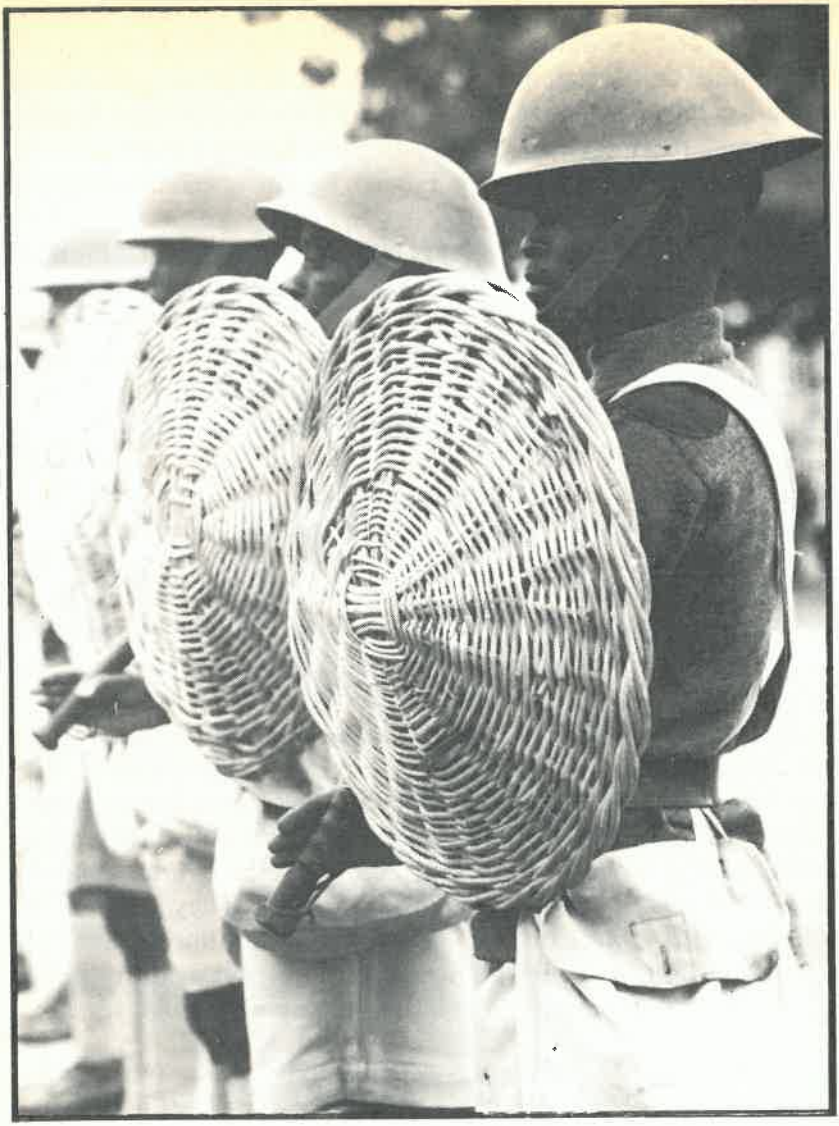
others were abandoned because Seretse was ill at the time. In addition to his editor's duties, Masire travelled over 5000 kms between the 7th and 23rd of that month and addressed twenty-four meetings in the Kgalagadi, Ghanzi and Western Kweneng districts. Dambe held twenty meetings in the BoBirwa and BuKalanga districts, while Tsoebebe covered the Kgatleng, Eastern Kweneng and the southern portion of GammaNgwato.

Meanwhile, the BPP leaders continued fighting amongst themselves. Just after the Conference, the Matante faction started to split again when long-standing tensions between Matante and Motsete came to the surface. The quarrel began over tactics. Matante wanted the party to be more extremist and to foment civil disorder. Motsete, who had prevented Matante from trying to disrupt the Constitutional Conference, wanted to steer a moderate course by accepting a modified form of LEGCO. By October 1963, differences between the two appeared irreconcilable.

In November an incident in Francistown finally drove Matante and Motsete apart. On the 12th, a protest against a law licensing the brewing of traditional beer was staged inside Tatitown beerhall and was led primarily by shebeen women (they were demonstrating, too, against the Tati Company monopoly of beer selling in the North-East). When the women refused to leave, the police arrested forty-five and charged them with trespassing. On the following day, members of the BPP Youth League in Francistown demonstrated outside the beerhall against the arrests. When the police arrived, the youths hurled stones and several petrol bombs (which failed to ignite), and the police responded with tear gas. They arrested 103 demonstrators. Matante had not been involved, but he threw his support behind the youth leaguers and spoke out against "police repression". Matante's popularity among township residents soared.

In December Motsete approached Mpho about forming an alliance. Negotiations, however, soon broke down. Mpho was unwilling to share power with the elderly BPP founder, whose followers were comparatively few. Mpho also chose that moment to shed the BPP name for his wing and adopt instead the Botswana Independence Party. The BIP was the first party to use "Botswana" for this country.

Now alone, Motsete claimed that he and his followers were the true BPP, but his support declined. As time drew closer for the first Legislative Assembly elections, Motsete's group faded into insignificance.



Bechuanaland Protectorate riot police, 1963

The 1965 elections

In early 1964 the Government announced that the Protectorate's first elections would be held in March 1965. A year was required to count and register the voting population of the territory. In 1964 a census was conducted, the most comprehensive population survey yet undertaken. The Government then launched an information

campaign to explain to the people the new electoral system. True to form, the BDP cooperated wholeheartedly in this exercise. Matante's BPP, ever suspicious, charged that the registration process was "rigged". Peter Maruping, BPP Secretary-General, was convicted and sentenced to six months imprisonment under a section of the penal code making it an offence to make false accusations against registration officers.

With elections approaching, the campaigns of the parties stood in sharp contrast. The BDP were well prepared, with candidates and supporters in every one of the thirty-one constituencies. The other parties struggled to nominate candidates, and in many areas they failed. Organization, rather than finance, account for the differences. The BPP (Matante), the BDP and the BIP each had sources of internal and external support and, in the months leading up to the election, the first two were well financed. Executive members of each party travelled widely. Seretse visited the United States, Europe and countries throughout Africa.

Matante and Mpho visited the socialist countries in Europe and Asia, as well as many countries in Africa. The efforts of the BDP continued unabated while its executives travelled abroad. The other two parties, however, suffered badly during the absence of their leaders.

In the final weeks of the campaign, political activity was concentrated mainly in the South, which politicians believed contained the most marginal constituencies. The BPP (Matante) felt secure in the North-East. The BDP was confident it could hold GammaNgwato. The BIP pinned its greatest hopes for success in Ngamiland. Government officials, who watched with great interest, predicted that the BDP would take all but seven elected seats.

When the results came in after election day, the BDP won by a landslide. They captured twenty-eight seats, with the remaining three going to Matante's BPP. The BIP failed to take a seat, even in Ngamiland. The only BPP (Motsete) candidate, who was Motsete himself, lost his deposit in Lobatse. Of the total votes cast, the BDP garnered 80 per cent, Matante's BPP 14 per cent and the BIP slightly less than 5 per cent.

In spite of fears voiced in many quarters about possible violence and disorder, voters and supporters of each party conducted themselves in a peaceful manner.

The emergence of the National Front (BNF)

Soon after the election, another political party came into being, the

last major political movement to emerge during the colonial era. In early 1965, Kenneth Koma returned from his studies overseas. He was unable to run in the election, but soon after it was over he created a coalition of groups opposed to the new BDP government. Initial efforts were made to reunite the BPP and BIP. Koma also contacted those traditional leaders who were upset by their loss of power following the constitutional reforms. Prominent among them were Linchwe II of the BaKgatla and Seepapitso Gaseitsiwe, heir to the bogosi of the BaNgwaketse. Seepapitso had already begun to form his own party, the Botswana National Union (BNU), which he hoped could take part in independence negotiations.

In time these elements were forged into a new group. In April BNU members joined the BPP and BIP in discussions towards forming a united, national party. For six months, these talks were held in Mochudi with the support of Kgosi Linchwe. Also taking part were other notables, including such veterans as Leetile Raditladi and K.T. Motsete. In October the Botswana National Front began its formal existence after an inaugural conference in Mochudi. The BNF attracted none of the BPP or BIP leaders, but it pulled into its ranks many of their followers. In Molepolole, for example, the entire BPP branch defected to the BNF. Linchwe, Seepapitso and other traditional leaders did not join the new party, but they studied BNF progress closely.

The meaning of multi-party politics

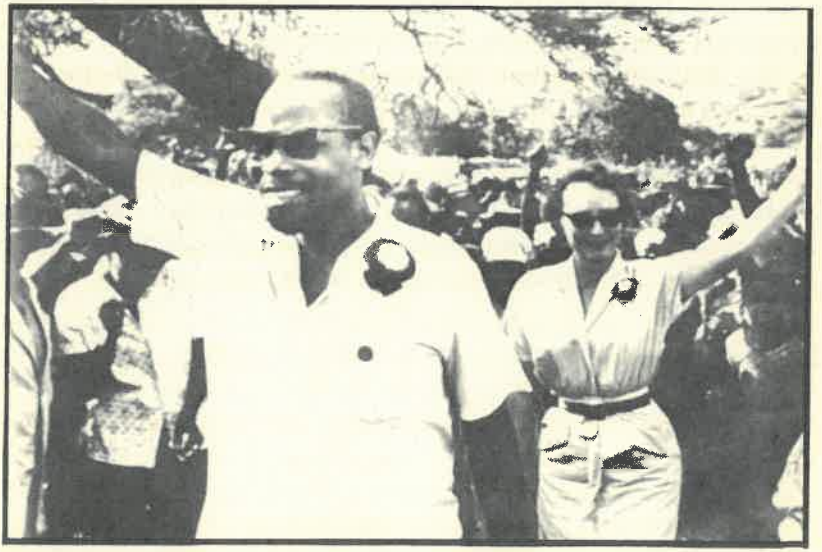
In spite of the overwhelming BDP victory, the activities of the BPP factions, the BIP and the latecomer, the BNF, reveal that nearly-independent Botswana was capable of producing a variety of modern politicians. A number of these men, their parties and their hopes persist into the present. Politics always involves a quest for power, and ambition is a quality every politician must possess. For this very reason, politicians are usually distrusted by the voting public, who pay the price for power grabs and corruption. Yet, politics is in fact a difficult career, full of setbacks, and the majority involved seldom reap rewards of power or wealth. By and large, their major compensation is being in the public eye.

In the late colonial period in this country, different parties emerged because educated men, on whose shoulders the burden of independence would rest, could not agree about the future. Much importance is often attached to differences of "ideology" that separate party leaders, but the BDP, BPP, BIP and BNF have always had a great deal in common. Nearly all party leaders were

people of social standing, education, influence, and financial means. Their outlook, sometimes referred to as "petty bourgeois", was restricted mainly to taking over the reins of power. All fought for political independence, but they accepted the economic and social system more or less as it stood. The BIP and the BNF introduced ideas of "African socialism", but they did very little to promote them. Rather than ideology, what distinguished parties in the early 1960s was the type of organization each established to accomplish their objectives. In this respect, the BDP was far and away the most successful.

The BDP was made up of leaders who had learned four important lessons from the colonial experience. The first was that the Government, no matter how disliked, had created institutions through which public opinion could be influenced. By recruiting among local and district councillors, the BDP gained the means whereby their message could reach all parts of the Protectorate. Second, they decided to bypass the diKgosi, whom the public had come to fear and dislike. The BDP, contrary to popular talk, was never a "chiefs' party". DiKgosi were treated courteously, but on the whole they were ignored.

Third, the BDP took as its leader a man born as a traditional leader but one who had made his mark by resisting the Government at the risk of losing power. Seretse Khama was never anti-Government in the sense that Matante and Mpho were, but only he had made a personal sacrifice worthy of the name.



Seretse and Ruth at a BDP rally, 1965

Fourth, the BDP knew that any national party would have to overcome the many tribal divisions maintained by the colonial Government for purposes of administration. This meant more than speaking out against "tribalism"; all parties did that. It meant breaking down the isolation separating the widely-scattered population from the BDP men who wanted to lead them. Overcoming isolation and divisions meant driving thousands of kilometres over dirt and sandy tracks and speaking to people who had never heard words like "self-government", "legislative assembly" and "independence", much less "BDP".

The other parties recognized the importance of independence, and men such as Motsamai Mpho campaigned vigorously to spread his message and drum up support. Yet, he and the BPP lost sight of the need for unity and recruiting in the rural areas where most voters were. Too much time was spent flying abroad to attend conferences. Whatever lessons were to be learnt from African nationalists in other countries, the voters of the Protectorate wanted politicians who were known to them and familiar with local problems.

After the 1962 BPP split, the Matante faction also made the mistake of underestimating the value of organization. Here again, Matante's connections with the PAC may account for such a misguided policy. The PAC believed that an effective mass organization was unimportant. What counted was a charismatic leader who would ignite the people's will to rise up and throw off the Government. Matante saw himself as such a leader. Thus, while he continued delivering firey speeches along the rail line, the BPP continued losing followers in the rural areas.

The multi-party system that emerged in the 1960s was therefore extremely lopsided. The very large majority gained by the BDP in 1965 left but a handful of voters for the other parties. In theory, no party could be excluded from elections, but in practice the BDP held power at the beginning without any serious challenge. Thus, when independence arrived, Botswana's modern political history began as one-party rule operating within a multi-party system.

Chapter 14

"One Botswana, One Nation": The Arrival of Independence

As boipuso approached, many problems followed BaTswana down the path to freedom. On 30 September 1966, when Botswana gained its independence, our nation was among the poorest in the world. The country had been devastated by a prolonged drought, leaving a huge number of cattle dead and most citizens dependent on famine relief. Annual per capita income was only P50, and Government revenues stood at P10 million, almost half of which came from British Government aid and grants. Sceptics, citing such statistics, questioned whether Botswana had a future at all. The best the country could aspire to, some alleged, was to be a "functional bantustan" of South Africa.

Yet, signs of progress were visible. In the final years of the Protectorate, a number of strides had been made in the economic, social and political spheres. A great deal of work and planning was done, and transforming the country for the benefit of the people over the long run was well underway. The doomsayers failed to appreciate that BaTswana were determined to uphold their independence, in spite of the odds.

In the years following independence, the new country's internal and external relations changed dramatically. And all were built on the foundations laid during the exciting period leading up to 30 September 1966.

Economic developments

Years of colonial rule had left this country's economy dependent on serving outside interests. Over time the country had shifted from being an exporter of its resources and products to being an exporter of labour. By 1964 two out of every three active male wage labourers were absent in South Africa at any given time. Migrant labourers earned very little for themselves but contributed a great deal to the economic strength of apartheid and to the prosperity of British-controlled commercial and mining interests. Even in the Protectorate, most economic activity benefitted outsiders. In 1955, for example, Africans had only fifteen per cent of all trading licences. Major employers such as the Government, railways and

abattoir relied on expatriates to run things and placed Africans in subordinate positions only. Apart from the abattoir, virtually no industry existed in the country. There were few schools or other social services and virtually no paved roads. Before independence, however, attempts were being made to alter this bleak picture.

After 1954 the abattoir in Lobatse helped to revive the livestock industry. By 1965, the latter accounted for eighty-seven per cent of the country's export revenues. The abattoir was financed by the Colonial Development Corporation, which invested nearly four million Pula in the country before independence. The CDC was a profit-making venture, not a charity organization. By 1965 it had also invested 500,000 Pula in Lesotho and fifty million Pula in Swaziland. Yet the local success of the CDC later served as a model for the creation of the Botswana Development Corporation.

In the early 1960s, drought halted progress in the livestock industry. By independence, 400,000 head of cattle had perished. The loss represented an estimated one third of the national herd. Many cattleowners were left without a single beast. Skins from carcasses were so plentiful they sold for 25 thebe. In 1965, at the height of the drought, one store in Mochudi had a monthly inventory of 3,000 hides. Children were kept busy collecting bones, which the abattoir purchased for grinding into bone meal to keep surviving cattle alive.

The drought also devastated agriculture. At independence only 5,668 hectares, or less than two per cent of the estimated arable land in the country, were under cultivation. Hunger was a common companion. By 1965 about 360,000 persons (i.e., over two thirds of the population) depended on donated food rations, most of which were distributed as part of "food-for-work" programmes. In the winter of 1966, however, the rains began to return, and prospects in the agro-pastoral sector steadily improved.

By independence, Botswana's mineral potential was gradually being recognized. Throughout much of the colonial period, mineral development was stifled by the BSACo, which held exclusive rights to most of the territory's minerals. The few independent ventures, such as Moshaneng Asbestos and Otse Nickel mines, operated on a small scale and had erratic outputs. In the 1950s, however, real mineral development began. The signing of the Bamangwato-RST/-BCL mining agreement opened the door by stimulating mineral prospecting in GammaNgwato. By independence, deposits of copper-nickel, coal and soda ash had been discovered. And eight months after Botswana's flag was first raised, the announcement was made that a major kimberlite "pipe" had been discovered at Orapa.

During the early 1960s, other economic initiatives were taken. In 1959 the Bamangwato Rural Development Association was founded, and similar associations sprang up elsewhere. The Co-operative movement, too, got underway. In 1963, after some hesitation, the Protectorate Government introduced the Cooperative Societies Law and a year later established the Cooperative Societies Department. By December 1965, ten Co-ops had been established.

Building the capital

Another late development was the founding of modern Gaborone as the capital for the soon-to-be Republic. Long years of colonial neglect had been symbolized by Britain's use of Mafikeng, outside the territory, as the Protectorate's seat of administration. Before World War II, the authorities considered moving headquarters to Lobatse, but London refused to foot the bill. During the 1950s, such JAC members as Bathoen II, Russell England and M.L.A. Kgasa called for the transfer of the capital. Their appeal was strengthened by the fact that one of the leading JAC members, Seretse Khama, had been declared a prohibited immigrant in South Africa and could not therefore attend meetings in Mafikeng. (For this very reason, JAC/LEGCO meetings were held in Lobatse.) In 1959, when Government accepted the LEGCO idea, they also commissioned a study of possible sites for a new capital. The commission recommended that the area now known as Gaborone was ideal on account of its potential water supply and abundance of state-owned land. In 1961, in one of its first acts, LEGCO accepted the recommendation.

In 1963 the building of Gaborone commenced. At the time, only Gaberones government camp (now known as "The Village") and the railway station were in existence. By 1966, when the basic features of Gaborone were in place, the new capital had over 4,000 residents. Most of these lived at (Old) Naledi, which emerged almost overnight as a squatter camp. In 1966 the Gaborone Town Council was established in the wake of the 1965 local government reforms (see chapter 12). A sidelight to Gaborone's early history was an aborted attempt by a group of Mafikeng residents, including the town's mayor, to preserve their status by having their community and the area around it annexed to the Protectorate.

After World War II a system of five year plans was introduced throughout the British Empire. Until 1963, however, economic planning in the Protectorate had consisted of little more than

estimates of revenue and expenditure. The 1963 plan was the precursor to modern National Development Plans. It provided for the financing of Gaborone and other projects. The total budget outlay was nearly twenty-four million Pula, one fifth of which was earmarked for Gaborone's development. Funds were allocated to other parts of the country for roads, schools, health facilities and a variety of other new social services that fell under the Government's responsibility. Almost all money for the five year plan came from external sources. Britain was the single largest contributor. In 1963, while on tour in the United States, Seretse Khama received nearly four million Pula from the World Bank's International Development Agency to finance the upgrading of roads.

Education

Throughout most of the colonial period, education had been left largely in the hands of the merafe and the missions. As in other areas, much progress was made in the years leading up to independence. Between 1960 and 1965, for example, the number of primary school students nearly doubled, from thirty-five to sixty-six thousand. Many children still remained outside the school system, however, and few of those in school passed the Primary School Leaving Examination. In 1965 only 1,439 were eligible to enter secondary school.

Conditions above the primary level also reflected a mixture of progress and constraint. The territory's first secondary school, St Joseph's College at Khale, was founded by the Roman Catholic Church in 1944. Initially it only offered the equivalent of a J.C. course. In 1949 Moeng College opened, and others soon followed. By 1965 the territory had nine secondary schools. All had or were about to introduce forms leading up to the "matriculation" exam administered from South Africa. The total student enrolment was 1,565. Notable among the new schools was Swaneng Hill. Founded in 1963 by Patrick Van Rensburg, Swaneng pioneered the implementation of ideas of education with production.

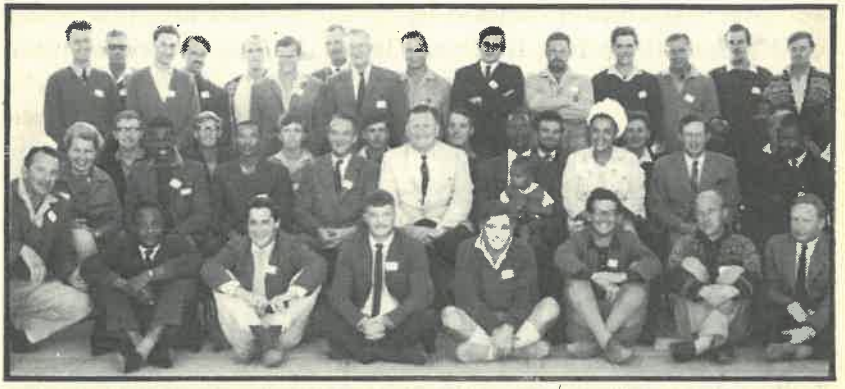
Tertiary education was also advancing, even though university students were few. Between 1960 and 1966 about seventy-five individuals studied outside the country, mostly on Government scholarships. A few of them studied in Lesotho at Pius the XII College in Roma, which in 1963 became the University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. UBBS, UBLS and UBS were the precursors of the present University of Botswana.

In spite of these advances, the state of education at independence was hardly promising. Only 2,416 people in the country had passed their JC, while no more than thirty-five people held university degrees. Some feared that, modest as Botswana's education system was, the new Government would not be able to maintain it. At the time, the country had only five qualified BaTswana secondary school teachers.

Localization

In virtually all Government divisions and departments, administration was carried out by foreigners. In 1964 only one Motswana occupied a senior administrative (superscale) post in the public service. Only 143 others were in medium-level professional and technical categories. In contrast, expatriates occupied 31 superscale and 407 medium grade posts. A number of BaTswana were employed by the various Tribal Administrations, which had expanded since the introduction of Tribal Treasuries in 1938, but their standards and conditions of service were inferior to those of the central Government.

As independence approached, localization became a controversial issue. Since the 1950s Africans in the Bechuanaland Protectorate Civil Servants' Association had tried to advance their interests, but their success was limited. In 1966 Special Commissioner T.C. Luke examined the localization issue, but his report mainly underlined the difficulties Botswana would face without retaining expatriate staff. And, at independence, many senior posts below cabinet ministers remained in expatriate hands, including sensitive posts in security and planning.



The staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, 1968

Localization was also related to Government control of basic services. Greater strides were made in this respect than was the case with staffing. Between 1961 and 1966, such essential institutions as Posts and Telecommunications were set up. Local banking services were expanded by Barclays and Standard banks, and the National Development Bank was introduced along with a variety of other Government institutions such as Radio Botswana and the precursor to Air Botswana.

Security and sovereignty

As independence approached, BaTswana also faced the problem of protecting their territorial integrity. Botswana came into existence as a majority-ruled state completely surrounded by white-ruled territories. Even within its own boundaries resided whites who opposed constitutional developments and tried to foment secessionist movements. In the early 1960s, Rhodesian and South African security forces stepped up their periodic violations of Bechuanaland's sovereignty, and just before independence, a group of African freedom fighters used this territory as a base of infiltration.

During the 1960s the South African threat was very much alive. In June 1963 South African Prime Minister Dr H.F. Verwoerd called for the inclusion of the High Commission Territories into the emerging Bantustan system. Verwoerd tried to interest some conservative traditional leaders in supporting his call, but no prominent BaTswana were willing to consider his offer seriously. In the same year South Africa dramatically escalated its use of terror tactics inside the Protectorate to obstruct the move towards independence and strike at South African refugees. Between 1960 and 1964 over 1,400 South Africans fled to the Protectorate, and South African security forces followed them. In the winter of 1963, numerous incidents occurred in Francistown. "White House", which provided temporary accommodation to refugees, was bombed, a plane used to airlift refugees was destroyed and a number of refugees were kidnapped in the town and in other parts of the Protectorate. Among them was Dr Kenneth Abrahams, the prominent Namibian nationalist, who was eventually released as a result of official protests.

The Government countered South Africa's threats by increasing its own internal security capabilities and vigilance. In another event during 1963, officials learned that the Southern Rhodesia Government planned to transfer a political prisoner from its territory to

South Africa by train via its railway through Bechuanaland. Protectorate officers stopped the train in Mahalapye and released the prisoner. This move effectively established Bechuanaland's sovereignty over the still foreign-owned rail line.

Meanwhile, groups of white Protectorate residents were busy trying to integrate such freehold areas as the Tati and Tuli Block into South Africa or Rhodesia. In fact, most whites accepted the move towards independence and many supported nationalist parties, especially the BDP. A minority, however, wished to preserve their special status after independence. They wanted either representation through racially-separate seats or through delimitation of a special constituency in freehold areas dominated by the white electorate. In 1963 their demands were not supported by European LEGCO representatives, who accepted the one man, one vote constitution. Two white groups, however, remained disgruntled.

One secessionist clique was made up of South African citizens. Some lived, while others merely owned property, in the Protectorate (especially the Tuli Block). The absentee owners included two South African cabinet ministers. After 1960 all South African and other non-citizens of the British Empire were excluded from taking part in elections and other political activities in the Protectorate. South African secessionists in the Protectorate then looked to their own Government to champion their cause.

The second clique was made up of Rhodesian and pro-Rhodesian residents in the North-East. In February 1964, 320 white farmers in the Tati region petitioned the Government proclaiming their "right" to withdraw from "British protection". This petition was followed in June by an appeal to the United Nations, of all places, for protection of their "right to self-determination". When no one listened, the movement faded away. In 1965, however, fear of a revival of secessionist activity was aroused in November when Southern Rhodesian whites announced their Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain. As Botswana's independence approached, the British army stationed a garrison at Francistown to protect a BBC radio station set up there to broadcast news into Rhodesia. The troops also strengthened Britain's defence of the integrity of this territory.

As the secessionist movement died, a long-term and greater threat to Botswana's sovereignty emerged. In the 1960s part of the armed liberation struggle against white rule in South Africa and Rhodesia began to influence events inside Bechuanaland's borders. Since December 1961, armed wings of the ANC and PAC had been carry-

ing out low-level sabotage campaigns against South Africa. In August 1966 other liberation movements began their attacks on South-African-held Namibia and the white settler regime in Rhodesia. This latter struggle, the 2nd Chimurenga, commenced when armed ZAPU guerillas infiltrated Matebeleland via northern Botswana. At independence, most BaTswana sympathized with the liberationists, but they recognized the need to secure Botswana's own sovereignty.

After independence, the Government upheld the previous colonial policy of forbidding its territory to be used as a base of attack against neighbouring white-ruled states. At the same time, Botswana made known its abhorrence of their racist policies and gave sanctuary to political refugees and others fleeing oppression across the border.

One Botswana, One Nation

On 30 September 1966 the world began its watch to see if Botswana would be able to maintain its independence or regress into the status of a "functional Bantustan". Seretse Khama gave courage to many through such actions as the appointment of the renowned black South African activist, Professor Z.K. Matthews, as Botswana's first Ambassador to the United Nations, our voice to the world. Botswana's foreign policy was also aligned to the other states of the Organization of African Unity, and particularly close relations were established with Zambia, our only liberated neighbour. Botswana refused to establish formal diplomatic relations with South Africa or Southern Rhodesia.

In 1968 Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia became the first foreign head of state to visit Botswana. His tour affirmed Botswana's membership in free Africa. Kaunda had rallied his own people with his cry of "One Zambia, One Nation!". And so, when large crowds met Kaunda in this country, they responded by shouting with the same enthusiasm, "One Botswana, One Nation!". This young independent country was growing fast.

Appendix I: diKgosi of the Principal Merafe

BAKGATLA bagaKgafela	
Linchwe I	1875-1920
Isang*	1921-1929
Molefi	1929-1936, 1945-1958
Mmusi*	1936-1942, 1958-1963
Ruling three-man council	1942-1945
Linchwe II	1963-present
BAKGATLA bagaMmanaana	
Gobuamang*	1901-1912
Kgabophuti	1912-1918
Gobuamang	1918-1940
Kgabosetso (Mosopa branch)	1935-1945
Letlole (Thamaga branch)	1940-Present
BAKWENA bagaKgabo	
Sebele I	1892-1911
Sechele II	1911-1918
Sebele II	1918-1931 (died 1939)
Kgari Sechele	1931-1962
Kenelakgosi*	1962-1963
Neale Sechele	1963-1970 (abdicated)
BALETE	
Mokgosi II	1896-1906
Baitlotle*	1906-1917
Seboko	1917-1937
Ketshwerebothata*	1937-1945
Mokgosi III	1945-1966
Kelemogile*	1966-Present
BANGWAKETSE	
Bathoen I	1889-1910
Seepapitso II	1910-1916
Kgosimotse*	1916-1918
Malope*	1918-1919
Tshosa*	1919-1923
Gagoangwe*	1923-1924
Ntebogang*	1924-1928

(* — Motshwareledi)

Bathoen II	1928-1969 (abdicated)
BANGWATO	
Khama III	1875-1923
Sekgoma II	1923-1925
Gorewang*	1925
Tshekedi*	1925-1949
(Seretse)	(1949-1963)
Rule by District Commissioner	(1949-1953)
Rasebolai Kgamane*	1953-1963
Leapetswe Khama*	1963-1975
BAROLONG booRaTshidi	
Badirile*	1903-1911
Lekoko*	1911-1915
Joshua*	1915-1917
Bakalopang*	1917-1919
Lotlamoreng	1919-1954
Kebalepile	1954-1969
BATAWANA	
Sekgoma	1891-1906
Sekgathole*	1906
Mathiba	1906-1933
Monnaamaburu*	1933-1934
Dibolayang*	1934-1936
Gaetsalwe*	1936-1937
Moremi III	1937-1946
Pulane*	1947-1964
Letsolathebe	1964-1980
BATLOKWA	
Gaborone	1880-1931
Matlala	1932-1948
Kgosi II	1949-1973

1901-1907
1907-1916
1916-1917
1917-1923

1923-1927
1928-1930
1930-1937
1937-1942

LARKE

THOMPSON 1942-1946
1946-1950
1950-1953
1953-1955

ETHAM 1955-1959
IACKENZIE 1959-1965
1965-1966

ield WRAY
FAWCUS
Y NORMAN-WALKER

...ting two or more
...e. **mofaladi)**. A group of fo
...come under the rule of a Kgosi (a
-atlhanka (see **botlhanka)**
Batshwareledi (see **Motshwareledi)**
Bo- A prefix denoting an area (e.g. Botswana)
bogosi)
bogadi The institution of bridewealth for which catt
by the family of the groom to the family of the bride.
required to legitimize the marriage.
bogosi The office occupied by the Kgosi and the institutio
tives attached to the office.
bogwera The institution of male initiation into adulthood.
bojale The institution of female initiation into adulthood.
bolata The institution of hereditary servitude.
boShe (see **She)**
botlhanka The institution defining individual social service based on
inferiority or subordinate status (in Ngamiland and other Northern
areas, it can also apply to groups).
botshwareledi The institution of regency.
dichaba (see **Sechaba)**
dikgotla (see **kgotla)**
diKgosi (see **Kgosi)**
ding'aka (sing. **ng'aka)** Traditional doctors who treat medical and
witchcraft cases, both human and veterinary, as well as practise divina-
tion.
GamaLete The territory of the BaLete (Bamelete Reserve).
GammaNgwato The territory of the BaNgwato (Bamangwato Reserve).
GaNgwaketse The territory of the BaNgwaketse (Bangwaketse Reserve).
impi An Nguni equivalent of **mophato**, q.v.
Ipelegeng Lit., "help yourselves", usually issued as a challenge
connoting assertiveness.

Kgalagadi The large sandy arid bush-covered veld that covers most of the western parts of Botswana. Also a common name used by people in Southern Africa to refer to the country of Botswana.

kgamelo Lit. "milk sack", refers to cattle held for the diKgosi of BaNgwato and BaTawana by selected clients.

kgotla (pl. **dikgotla**) (1) a meeting place for the ward or morafe; (2) a meeting for the discussion of group matters of any importance; (3) a court for settling disputes within the group according to customary law.

kgosana (pl. **dikgosana**) A diminutive for Kgosi, denoting royals descended patrilineally from diKgosi.

Kgosi (pl. **diKgosi**) (1) the highest executive, judicial and legislative authority in the morafe; (2) the head of the lineage recognized as senior by all members of the morafe; (3) the eldest son of the ranking wife of a deceased Kgosi or deceased Kgosi apparent; (4) a title and form of address used with reference to the person who holds the office of Kgosi or Motshwareledi.

khadi A liquor distilled from sorghum, honey and/or other ingredients.

lelapa (lolwapa) (1) the homestead or compound maintained by the father for his wife and their natural or adoptive children; (2) the sons and daughters of a mother entitled to their father's inheritance.

lesotla (pl. **masotla**) A field cultivated and harvested by the people for their Kgosi and his public needs.

letsholo A large hunt and/or secret meeting in the veld among armed men settling contentious matters which can be punishable by death.

mafisa Cattle loaned to individuals for their use in return for proper care and offspring.

makalaka

makoba Setswana terms for peoples of low or foreign status.

malata

masarwa

matimela Stray cattle collected and held by the Kgosi and his representatives, to be claimed by the owners or to be used for public purposes.

melao Laws pronounced by the Kgosi.

mephato (see **mophato**)

merafe (see **morafe**)

meraka (sing. **moraka**) Cattle posts and grazing areas.

mfecane Nguni word for "the crushing", referring to the period of turmoil and war engulfing Southern Africa in the early 19th century. (SeTswana: difakane)

Mo- Refers to a single person (e.g. MoTswana) or used as a term of respect of a Kgosi (e.g., MoKgatla).

mofaladi (see **bafaladi**)

mogau A noxious weed that can cause death to cattle who eat it.

mogolo An older, senior person deserving respect.

Mohumagadi A title of respect used to refer to a senior woman in the morafe, such as the Kgosi's wife or a Motshwareledi.

mophato (pl. **mephato**) A group of men or women initiated together and who are expected to assist the morafe in performing public tasks, projects and police actions.

morafe (pl. **merafe**) The people ruled by a Kgosi.

moruti A teacher, particularly a religious teacher. Also used for a Reverend, or minister.

Motshwareledi (pl. **Batshwareledi**) A regent.

motswere A dry veld tree with extremely hard and heavy wood.

Nkosi Nguni equivalent of Kgosi.

phuti A duiker antelope, and also the totem of the ruling BaNgwato and BaTawana lineages.

Sechaba (pl. **dichaba**) Often used interchangeably with morafe, but used in recent years with the connotation of "nation".

She (pl. **boShe**) Among BaKalanga and Shona-speaking peoples, the eldest living brother of the senior lineage in a village. His powers are limited mainly to arbitrating disputes and allocating land.

Tswana, Ba-, Mo-, Se- BaTswana: the people who speak SeTswana or who are citizens of Botswana; MoTswana: a person who speaks SeTswana or who is a citizen of Botswana; SeTswana: the language spoken by BaTswana or an adjective referring to their culture or their ways of life.

Appendix IV: List of Further Reading

Note to readers in Botswana: Very few books have been written on Botswana's history, particularly for the period covered in *Birth of Botswana*, and few of these are still in print. A number of articles have been published in journals, but apart from *Botswana Notes and Records,* they and university seminar papers are available only in one of five libraries in Gaborone: the National Library, the University Library, the National Institute of Research, the National Museum and Art Gallery and the National Archives. In addition, these libraries have over 100 essays written by 4th-year University students who have conducted research on pre-colonial and colonial Botswana history. A bibliography of these, entitled *Essays on the History of Botswana*, compiled by Kevin Shillington, is available from the Department of History, University of Botswana, Private Bag 0022, Gaborone.

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Forthcoming Titles. In the next two years, the following are expected to appear in published form (titles may differ somewhat).

Crowder, Michael. *A Biography of Tshekedi Khama.*

Crowder, Michael. *The Flogging of Phinehas MacIntosh.*

Crowder, Michael and Parsons, Neil. (eds.) *The Diaries of Charles Rey.*

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Morton, F., Murray, A. and Ramsay, J. *An Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Botswana* (Scarecrow Press).

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